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PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

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PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

BY

REV. J. P. MAUD, M.A.

VICAR OF ST. MARY REDCLIFFE, BRISTOL

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY
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PREFACE

In the practical work of a parish, the preparation of Candidates for Confirmation presents a unique opportunity to the Clergy. To many of their parishioners it is the one great opportunity in life for receiving systematic and definite instruction in the Christian Faith; while to the clergy it affords the best chance they will ever have of coming into close contact with those upon whom they are anxious to exert permanent influence.

It is with the utmost diffidence that any Parish Priest would attempt to give the results of his own experience in such a field for the benefit of those who annually are engaged in this work. The present writer was only induced to add one more to the many books on the subject from a desire to assist those who are just entering on their ministerial career, and by a conviction that so many among the newly ordained are asked at once to

prepare candidates for Confirmation without having access to those results of experience which might be of invaluable service at the outset of their work. This book contains what was in substance addressed to the students of a Theological College, and is in the main intended to assist the junior clergy in determining the line of teaching they will adopt, and the methods they will pursue. It does not attempt to be a Theological treatise on a subject which has been fully handled by such writers as Dr. Mason,[1] Dr. Bright,[2] Father Puller,[3] Bishop Hall,[4] Canon Wirgman,[5] and others.

An outlined scheme of instruction has been given in the Appendix, in the hope that it may be suggestive of what has been found to be of practical use.

J. P. M.

[1] *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism.*
[2] *Morality in Doctrine.*
[3] *What is the distinctive Grace of Confirmation?*
[4] *Confirmation.*
[5] *The Doctrine of Confirmation.*

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CHAPTER I

CONFIRMATION IN THE CHURCH

The place which Confirmation occupies in the Church's system is sufficiently marked to emphasise its importance.

The service for the Public Baptism of Infants concludes with the words—"Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose."

The Catechism is described as "an instruction to be learned of every person, before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop." The "Order of Confirmation" is explained to be "Laying on of hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion." It concludes with the rubric, "And there shall

none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed."

The underlying assumption is clear that all baptized persons will proceed to Confirmation. The normal course which is implied for every baptized child is that he will be confirmed, and will as a necessary consequence be admitted to the Holy Communion. The necessary and indispensable link between "the new birth unto righteousness" given in Holy Baptism, and "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ" in the Holy Communion, is the strengthening with the Holy Ghost by the Laying on of hands after the example of the holy Apostles.

It is important to realise that this is the view taken in the Church's system. Confirmation cannot then be regarded as the special privilege reserved for a few who are admitted to the full privileges and rights of the Christian Society after stringent tests. Rather, good and adequate reason must be shown why *every* baptized person should not be confirmed.

The truth has been thus summarised by Dr.

Moberly:—"In whatever sense, or degree, the power of practically exercising spiritual rights (whether some or all) may remain, for a time, in abeyance,—the essential right to all rights is, from the moment of baptism, already there. Whoever has been admitted into Christ has been admitted, implicitly at least, into all the fulness of the powers of the Spirit of Christ. This may be concretely expressed, on the practical side, by saying that every baptized person has *ipso facto*,—not so much the inherent right to dispense with Confirmation, as the inherent right to be confirmed. And such inherent right carries with it the inherent capacity, when 'the Laying on of hands,' *is, in the providence of God, withheld and impossible*, of all which the laying on of hands, in the normal course, would have either symbolised or conferred. To speak of the inherent right of the baptized to receive Confirmation is far more in accordance with Scripture, as well as with all Church conception and practice, than to think that they may dispense with being confirmed."[1]

This might be enough of itself to show the

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 263, 264.

importance of the subject. But the Church has particularly emphasised it by appointing Confirmation as the time when she brings definitely before all her children the demand to embrace the responsibilities of their Christian calling.

"The Church hath thought good to order, that none hereafter shall be confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and can also answer to such other Questions, as in the short Catechism are contained: which order is very convenient to be observed; to the end, that children, being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things, as they, by their own confession have assented unto."

Those who by Holy Baptism are admitted to the privileges of the Christian calling as infants, are expected, when they come to years

of discretion and have learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them, to renew the solemn promise and vow made in their name at their Baptism; to ratify and confirm it in their own persons, and to acknowledge themselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things which were then undertaken for them.

The Church waits expectantly for the moment when all baptized persons will enter into conscious realisation of that state of relationship to God into which they entered unconsciously when they were regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church. The definite period for such conscious realisation of their state of privilege, and their willing response to the claim made upon them, is fixed and determined as that which is known as their Confirmation.

The admission of infants to the privileges of the Christian state of salvation is not denied them because of their tender age. Their enjoyment of that state of privilege is, however, made dependent upon their fulfilment of the promise made by their sureties, "which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to

perform." Those who bring children to be baptized are expressly warned that "it is your parts and duty to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he hath here made by you;" and in the scheme of teaching prescribed for every baptized person in the Catechism it is emphatically taught that there is required of them both "Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament." The fulfilment of this binding promise is looked for "when they come to age." It is a fulfilment which must be attested in as public and solemn a manner as when it was first made by those who promised it in their name at their Baptism. It is expected of them that they will "themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same."

In a word, before the life of relationship to God in Christ can be enjoyed, it must be consciously realised. The relationship between God and His child which has existed ever since birth, and in unquestioned reality since Baptism, is

one which needs to be entered upon and claimed by those to whom the fulness of life must mean conscious union with a personal God. The step from "mere existence" to "real life" is effected when the baptized person awakes to consciousness of his relationship to God, and responds in the fulness of his being to the claims which He makes upon him.

The time when this step is truly made must mark a crisis in that person's life: it is of critical and vital importance. Because it can only proceed from a deep conviction of the personal relationship in which he stands to God, and find expression in glad willing response to His claim of love, it can be described most truly as a time of Conversion. Such indeed it is and must be. The solemn renewal of the promise and vow made in Holy Baptism is the explicit recognition by the baptized of all that such a "charitable work" implied, and is the willing response by one who makes glad surrender of himself to fulfil every claim of his life profession; "which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we,

who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living." For these reasons it is clear that the importance of the place assigned in the teaching of our Church to Confirmation can hardly be overstated.

To all alike it needs to be brought home that Confirmation is an event which concerns them, because it is bound up with that event of their Baptism, upon the realisation of which everything in their spiritual life must depend.

To exaggerate the importance of the opportunity of a Confirmation in the life of the parish is impossible, for it at once invites to the consideration of all that the life of Religion means, and challenges all baptized persons, whether confirmed or not, to make good their claim to walk answerably to their Christian calling.

It is of an opportunity so momentous that we must do all in our power to make the fullest and best use.

CHAPTER II

CONFIRMATION IN THE BIBLE

The importance attached by the Church to the Laying on of hands, is due

(*a*) to the place which it occupies in the Bible,

(*b*) to the universal practice of the Church from Apostolic times.

Confirmation can only be appreciated when it is regarded as a part of that scheme of Redemption which the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ has unfolded.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Such was the great purpose of Love. To effect it Christ took our human nature and made it the instrument for accomplishing the Divine end. Life, so He taught, was to be enjoyed in conscious union with God: the glory and the beauty of such life He manifested in the intelligible form of a human life lived under the manifold conditions and the infinitely varied circumstances

of life in the flesh. "The life which is life indeed" was seen on the earth in all its perfection in the Person of Him Who lived under the conditions of human nature in unbroken union with God; Who at every stage yielded up Himself to fulfil the will of God, and Whose Manhood was the perfect instrument of the Divine Spirit's unhindered working. It was thus that He manifested in His life on earth the meaning and intention of man's life: He exhibited it at its attainable height as union of man with God.

The ideal which, as men have beheld it, seemed so unattainable was to be capable of realisation under the present conditions and actual circumstances of human life. Christ promised man that he should have life, and have it more abundantly, not by manifesting an unapproachable example of holiness, but by giving to man the power of His own life.

All the promises in His Gospel to His Disciples are dependent for their fulfilment upon their receiving into themselves that power to live, which He spoke of as the Gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter or Strengthener. The Gospel which He gave to the world was indeed

a Gospel of Life, for it contained the promise of the abiding presence and indwelling power of the Lord and the Giver of life, the Holy Spirit. He had taught His disciples to attach themselves to Himself because He was "the way, the truth, and the life"—to come to Him as the one satisfaction of all life's needs: to depend on Him, as Teacher, Guide, Master, and Lord. And yet the hour drew near when He must leave them. No wonder that sorrow filled their hearts! They did not readily perceive how the great and glorious promises of the Gospel could be fulfilled by "the Exodus which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." As the end drew near He became more definite and explicit in His teaching as to how His great purpose of love was to be fulfilled by the coming of the Holy Spirit, to dwell in them and enable them to live in the power of His own life. "Because I live, ye shall live also."[1] The enjoyment of this life of which He spoke was to be attained by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with

[1] St John xiv. 19.

you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. . . . These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."[1]

"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you."[2]

"When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning."[3]

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto

[1] St John xiv. 16, 17, 25, 26.

[2] St John xv. 16. [3] St John xv. 26, 27.

you: but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. . . .

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself: but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you."[1]

With this purpose steadily in view, our blessed Lord had gathered the band of Apostles round Him: He had prepared them to receive the gift which was to enable them to represent Him in the world, to bear witness to His truth, to teach in His name, to found His kingdom.

The last words He spoke as He parted from them were a command to "wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me . . . Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth."[2]

[1] St John xvi. 7–14.

[2] Acts i. 4–9.

The fulfilment of the promise comes upon the day of Pentecost, when the Body which had been prepared receives the Spirit which is to enable it to be "the home of grace," the well-spring of life for all mankind. Life, which He had taught was union with Himself, became a reality to all who were grafted into that Body of which He was the living Head, and in union with which each individual member could receive the inflowing of His life by the operation of the Holy Spirit. There, in the Body which He had chosen and prepared, was to be the enjoyment of life more abundant; union between man and God was to be a realised relationship, and for all mankind, to the end of time, there was to be provision of that power to live which answered to the greatest need of weak, sinful, human nature.

As upon the reception of this great gift of the enabling Spirit every hope of life for man was dependent, it would be surprising indeed if no certified and defined means for such reception had been ordained.

When we turn to the record of what actually was done by those who were charged with the

great enterprise entrusted to them by the Lord, we find that the enjoyment of life in union with the Divine Source of all life is to be had in the use of sacramental means. The Acts of the Apostles, which record what the Apostles did in obedience to all they had been taught by their Master of the things concerning the kingdom, is the account of the operation of the Holy Spirit. It has been fitly described as "the Gospel of the Holy Spirit." The Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, by which the Apostles received power for their work, was the signal for the commencement of their Divine mission.

St Peter at once unfolds to the amazed and wondering spectators the meaning and magnificent scope of that signal fulfilment of the promise of the Father. This great gift of life is not for the exclusive benefit of those upon whom it has been so miraculously bestowed. It is for all mankind, even for those who had crucified the Lord Jesus.

When, pricked to the heart, they said to him and to the rest of the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" he declared unhesitatingly, "Repent, and be baptized every

one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."[1] Repentance and Faith are the indispensable requirements for that new birth unto righteousness which is the gift of God in Holy Baptism: and then the further gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit is one which they may confidently expect. That St Peter and the rest of the Apostles did not consider that the fulness of the gift of the Holy Spirit could be bestowed by Holy Baptism, is abundantly shown in the account of what happened at Samaria, of which we read in Acts viii. 14 *ff.* Here it is expressly stated

(*a*) that Baptism was the precedent condition to receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit;

(*b*) that by Baptism they had not received the Holy Spirit in the sense of His falling upon them and dwelling in them;

(*c*) that the gift was conveyed by the laying on of the Apostles' hands.

To prove that this practice did not stand alone,

[1] Acts ii. 37–39.

but was the uniform procedure of the Apostles, we have only to refer to the precise account contained in Acts xix. 1–6.

On meeting certain disciples at Ephesus, St Paul asks of them the elementary and fundamental question—"Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" The question would seem to be a sufficient proof to those who require to be convinced that this great gift is not the necessary accompaniment of faith. On hearing from them, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,"[1] he asks, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" What could be the purpose of Baptism if it did not conduct to the gift of the Holy Ghost? Then simply and briefly the historian tells us what St Paul did. He admitted them to Christian Baptism. "They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." He then confirmed them. "When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them."

That the doctrine of the Laying on of hands formed an integral part of the Christian Faith as taught by the Apostles is clear from a

[1] Or as R. V., "We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given."

passage which shows how universally it was recognised as one of the elementary principles of the Christian life.[1]

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews assumes a knowledge of elementary doctrines, without a grasp of which it were useless for him to offer the strong meat which "belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."[2] The first principles which must be accepted at the very outset of the Christian life, and are the foundation upon which all advance to perfection is made, are enumerated as "Repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God: the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands; and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." That the Laying on of hands here spoken of is what we understand by Confirmation is clear both from its close and intimate association with Baptism, and from its being put forward as a fundamental principle in the life of *every* Christian. This principle was certainly to the writer of this Epistle, as to St Paul and St Peter and

[1] Heb. vi. 1–4. [2] Heb. v. 14.

the rest of the Apostles, "the word of the beginning of Christ." In the verses which follow, it is further shown how important are these two first principles, Baptism and the Laying on of hands. "It is impossible," he says, "for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

The importance attached to Confirmation from the first days of the Church to the present time is due, then, to the position assigned to it in the practice of the Apostles, and in the records of that practice in the New Testament, which we have just considered. From a perusal of those accounts it is abundantly clear that by the Laying on of hands, those who had been baptized received the gift of the Holy Ghost—received, that is, that gift of power to live the Christian life, for which Christ took upon Him our nature, died upon the Cross, and triumphantly rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

That we have no records in the Gospels of explicit mention being made by our Lord Himself that "the promise of the Father" should be fulfilled to those who received the Laying on of hands, need occasion no surprise. The Apostles were simply told to "wait" for the gift; they were *not* told of the manner of its bestowal. There were many things which Christ had to say to them, and for receiving which they were not ripe during His life in the flesh; but they were to be led into all truth both in the realm of thought and action by the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

It is according to the principle of the Incarnation itself, that the great gift upon the receiving of which all promises depended, salvation by His life, should be bestowed in some outward and visible manner, so that men should be certified of God's good will and favour towards them. From the days of the Acts of the Apostles to the present time the Church has so regarded the solemn rite of Confirmation.[1]

Though we are free to admit that God is not

[1] *Cf.* Bishop Jeremy Taylor, *Discourse of Confirmation*, Section IV. :—

"The Bishops were always and the only ministers of Confirmation. This was the constant practice and doctrine

tied to any particular means of bestowing His gifts, believing as we do that the Spirit is invisible, and like the wind bloweth where it listeth, whereof we hear the sound and know not whence it cometh or whither it goeth, still it is sufficient for faith that this particular means of the Laying on of hands is that by which the Holy Ghost was received, and has been most certainly revealed to man. We therefore deem it neither honouring to God nor safe for ourselves to dispense with the use of it. "God is not tied to His Sacraments," as the phrase expresses it; but we who have opportunity for knowing what His revealed will is concerning us are tied to the use of them.

of the primitive Church, and derived from the practice and tradition of the Apostles, and recorded in the Acts written by St Luke. For this is our great rule in this case, what they did in rituals and consigned to posterity is our example and warranty: we see it done thus, and by these men, and by no others, and no otherwise, and we have no other authority, and we have no reason to go another way."

CHAPTER III

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

From the scriptural accounts of the Laying on of hands which we have considered, we learn that the gift received by those who believed and were baptized was "the gift of the Holy Ghost." Until then the baptized had not "received" the Holy Ghost. The Apostles "prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost," and when they laid their hands on them "they received the Holy Ghost."

Whatever was the distinct gift promised by our Saviour in the sending of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, "who dwelleth with you and shall be in you," that is the gift received by the Laying on of hands. That the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed only by the Laying on of hands at Confirmation, is at least clearly in the mind of our own Church from the prayer offered by the Bishop immediately preceding

the imposition of hands:—"Almighty and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins; Strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and for ever. Amen."

In this beautiful prayer (*a*) the antecedent conditions for receiving the gift are stated, viz. the fact that those for whom it is prayed have been regenerated by Water and the Holy Spirit, and have so truly repented of their sins that they have received forgiveness.

(*b*) The objective bestowal of the Holy Spirit is asked for. "Strengthen them with the Holy Ghost the Comforter."

(*c*) The subjective indwelling, by which grace is made to serve the purposes of grace, is sought for as the means whereby God's manifold gifts may be increased in the recipients.

It is clear that the gift sought for is something different from those already received by Baptism aud Repentance. Without attempting the impossible task of defining the special distinctive grace of Confirmation, it may suffice to think of it as the completion of the work which the Holy Spirit Himself began in Holy Baptism.

Hooker says that the gift is "to confirm and perfect that which the grace of the same Spirit had already begun in Baptism. . . . The reason wherefore Confirmation, nevertheless, by prayer and laying on of hands, hath hitherto always continued is for other very special benefits which the Church thereby enjoyeth. The Fathers everywhere impute unto it that gift or grace of the Holy Ghost, not which maketh us first Christian men, but when we are made such assisteth us in all virtue and armeth us against temptation and sin."[1]

We hold that at Baptism we receive implicitly and potentially *all* that sonship implies. We are born anew, we enter into a defined and sure relationship with God. We are given a new nature. The old man is so buried that

[1] *Ecclesiastical Polity*, v. § 66.

the new man may be raised up in us. A state is entered in which all carnal affections may die in us, and all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in us. A capacity is granted that we "may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh." The person baptized is spoken of as "being dead unto sin and living unto righteousness," of being "buried with Christ in His death, so that he may utterly abolish the whole body of sin." The gift of "life" has been bestowed; but there are forces at work still which sap vital energy, and cause a decay of forces and a defect of power. Even in the case of the living there is possible such a state as that of a living death, suspended animation, a being as good as dead. The Holy Spirit is therefore given that we may have "life more abundantly." At Baptism was bestowed the gift of life, the capacity to live. Life more abundant, life full and free and complete, can consist only in the exercise and conscious direction of all faculties in correspondence with the source and end of all life.

At the moment of birth we say "a man is born into the world." We call the babe a man because we believe that he is then endowed with all that will (granted care, nourishment, &c.) eventually make him a full-grown man. But as a matter of fact, the babe does not become a full-grown man until he has reached the age of maturity. At a certain definite point in his life the capacities of manhood which were latent at birth become actual. The stage is reached when the youth emerges from childhood and enters upon manhood. If he had not been endowed with these capacities at birth, he would not have become a full-grown man. He would still be said to be alive, the gift of life would be his; but he would not enter into the enjoyment of the full, perfect life of manhood. So at Baptism we are born anew, we are regenerate, we put on the new man; we are fully endowed with all capacities for life in the spiritual sphere. At Confirmation we receive in some mysterious manner that full capacity for spiritual life by which we may become complete, *i.e.* capable of living a complete life, and may enter on maturity. We

are not then made *ipso facto* complete or perfect any more than the natural man becomes a complete man at the moment of reaching maturity, but we become capable of all that an entrance on mature life has to yield. So at Confirmation there comes the completion of that state on which we entered at Baptism. We receive an endowment of power which will enable us to perfect that which has been begun.

The difficulty of determining the relation of Baptism to Confirmation has been justly described as arising from the attempt "to give with full completeness, in their separation, a *rationale* of the two ceremonies, which in fact require and imply one another, because they are really parts of an initiation which is, in theological idea, one whole. . . . There must always be, for the reason just given, a certain element of practical, if not logical, inexactness." The same writer adds that, "both in early patristic literature, and in Scripture itself, the Laying on of hands, when viewed in separation from Baptism, is characteristically identified with the gift, once for all, of the Pentecostal

Spirit. Whatever margin there may be of practical inexactness in the sharp denial of the Pentecostal gift to anything but the Laying on of hands; (and indeed the sharp antitheses of logic are seldom at all points applicable to anything so complex and living as spiritual experience); it is plain that the true principle expressed in such denial is deeper and more significant than the dangers of inexactness; for the denial is expressed with verbal emphasis, in the words of Scripture itself."[1]

The promised gift of the Holy Spirit, for which our blessed Lord commanded the disciples to wait, was not to supply the absence but to complete the presence of Christ Himself, the living Lord, with His own. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

"He dwelleth with you, and shall be in

[1] Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 262, 263. *Cf.* Mason, *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism*, p. 414: "Unless I have signally failed in the setting forth of the Scriptural and Patristic texts, two points will by this time be, I believe, abundantly clear: first, that if we are to be guided by primitive antiquity, Confirmation is an integral part of Holy Baptism, in such a sense that what we usually call Baptism is, without it, an unfinished fragment, although conveying priceless blessings; and secondly, that the *res Sacramenti*, the objective bounty extended by God for our

you." What Christ had been to them hitherto as an outward example and ideal, He was now to be as the inward principle of vital energy. The companionship which they had enjoyed, and in which they had felt security, was now to become more intimate. At Confirmation a relationship which has existed from the moment of our Baptism becomes realised, and by the coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, we enter upon the life which is described as that which is "hid with Christ in God," and of which we can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ which dwelleth in me."

We may think of our life as a journey for which from the outset we have present with us that Divine Companion who speaks of Himself as "the Way." He is present at every moment to guide and protect, to warn against enemies, and to encourage in face of difficulty.

acceptance, in this crowning part of Baptism, is that which bears the title of the gift of the Holy Ghost. In so special and unique a sense does this gift belong to Confirmation, that, notwithstanding all previous operations of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, the baptized but unconfirmed believer may, unless the Divine action departs from its ordinary course, be truly said not to have received the Holy Ghost."

Of His presence we may be at times only vaguely conscious, and often wholly unconscious. But at a certain stage of critical decision He makes known to us Who and What He really is; and from that moment of awakening and inspiration we enter on the enjoyment of a real and intimate friendship. Two disciples on the first Easter Day were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They talked together of all the things which had happened. Preoccupied as they were, and absorbed in communing together and reasoning of all that was in their hearts regarding the friend they loved, that friend Himself suddenly joined them. "But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." Jesus was the one object of their thoughts, and supreme in their affections, the while this unknown Companion made their hearts burn within them as He overcame doubts and kindled fresh hopes. They came to the parting of the ways. "He made as though He would have gone farther;" but, obeying an instinct of the heart which they could not define, "they constrained Him, saying, Abide

with us." He went in with them "to tarry with them." Then "their eyes were opened, and *they knew Him.*"

In such sort the life of the baptized is a journey with a loving though unknown Companion. He is "with us" all the while. He talks with us, teaches us, and opens to us fresh avenues which lead to truth. He makes our hearts to burn within us. Then at that critical moment known as our Confirmation, we advance from the condition of companionship to claim of Him a more intimate relationship. We constrain Him to abide with us; we will not let Him go until He bless. And according to His promise not to leave us comfortless, but to come to us and to be in us a power of enabling light, He yields to our constraining petition. He comes to tarry with us, to abide, to be in us. Then our eyes are opened, and we know Him. The Holy Spirit, on His coming, takes of Christ and reveals Him unto us. The relationship which had all along existed becomes intensely real, and we enter on the enjoyment of true life.

Confirmation conducts us to the enjoyment

of that life which consists in the abiding of the Holy Spirit in us. It is known as the Illapse of the Holy Spirit: as when at Pentecost, in the visible form of tongues of fire, "He sat upon each of them": or as, at Samaria, "He fell upon them," and "they received the Holy Ghost." Of the effect intended to be wrought upon our manhood by this descent of the Holy Spirit we may, with all reverence, gather much from what is told us of the baptism of our Lord Himself and the descent of the Holy Spirit which immediately followed.

In St Matt. iii. 16, 17, we read:—

"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

Though we believe that up to that moment the Holy Spirit had found in His human nature the instrument of perfect correspondence with His divine guidance, though He had never ceased to be the beloved Son in Whom

the Father was well pleased, yet, as a fact, it was from this moment that His work as the Christ, the Anointed of God, began.

He was empowered for His life's work, and His active ministry commenced forthwith;—His going about doing good, casting out devils by the finger of God, His being led up by the Spirit to endure that great fight of temptation from which He emerged triumphant.

Further, "the heavens were opened unto Him." All the Divine knowledge required for the fulfilment of the Father's will was unfolded to His understanding.

And, lastly, assurance was given to Him of the Divine sanction and approval when He heard that voice saying, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

Now these are just those gifts of which the promise was made by our Lord Himself to those whom He commanded to wait for the Holy Spirit.

(1) *Endowment with spiritual power.*

"Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you."—Acts i. 8.

(2) *Enlightenment in the understanding of the things pertaining to the Divine Will.*

"The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."—St John xiv. 26.

"When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself: but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will shew you things to come."—St John xvi. 13.

(3) *The Assurance of the Divine Call.*

"When the Comforter is come . . . He shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness." —St John xv. 26.

"If ye continue in My words then are ye My disciples indeed. And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."—St John viii. 31, 32.

We may thus reverently perceive what this abiding of the Holy Spirit is to effect in us.

(*a*) The personal descent of the Holy Spirit upon the regenerate in Confirmation is to be our *endowment* with the power which we need to serve God.

Confirmation is the admission of the Chris-

tian to his priesthood. From his baptism the Christian has been called to be a faithful soldier and servant of Jesus Christ. He was separated off, called and chosen for Divine service. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."—1 St Pet. ii. 9.

From the earliest times the outward act of Laying on hands was the recognised sign of the solemn dedication of persons and things to holy uses and for Divine service. By it the person was dedicated, consecrated, as well as blessed.

Under the Christian dispensation the Laying on of hands is not merely a sign of the Divine blessing resting upon the individual; it is the means whereby power is granted to him that he may be himself a blessing. Such endowment of power is not for personal edification merely; it is to enable the child of God to live answerably to his Christian vocation, to empower him to bear witness in the world, to make him an instrument by whom the Divine will may be accomplished among men.

Just as the ordinance of Confirmation can only be understood as a part of the whole plan of Salvation, so the effect produced by the Laying on of hands on the baptized will only be appreciated, as the mind of God is understood in the scope of its magnificent purpose. God's way of salvation for mankind is by man and through man. The Divine purpose is to be accomplished by the Spirit working in those who yield themselves in glad response to His guidance.

Those who received the Pentecostal outpouring received power to act. The power of the Holy Spirit was manifested in them as they set themselves to the work of the kingdom.

"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal"—its effect is to promote life, to make life more abundant, to do good. The gift of power at Confirmation therefore is to enable the Christian to answer the ends of his vocation and ministry in the world.

That Confirmation is verily and indeed an ordination of the laity is a truth which every Christian needs to grasp. If the Kingdom of God is to be extended, so that it come to include all kingdoms of the earth; if the cause of Truth

and Righteousness is to become supreme and dominant among men; then it is essential that the mass of Christian people be aroused to recognise that this *is* the universal calling of all Christians, and at the same time be convinced that it is a work which they can only hope to achieve in the power of the Holy Spirit actually bestowed by this Laying on of hands.

Of the Church's conspicuous failure to be such a power in human life we have become more acutely sensitive. In a recent pastoral letter to his clergy the Bishop of Bristol drew attention to a truth about the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, which has become considerably obscured of late. He said "the greatest need of the present age is a much more full realisation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. That presence and power are the gift of heaven to man, to guide us into all truth. The gift is infinite, in its width and in its intensity. To pray for a further outpouring is to question its infinity and to seek to remove from ourselves the responsibility for the comparative smallness of its effect upon the world. . . .

"The Bishop would urge upon all the men and

women in the diocese, all the boys and girls, to whatever religious body they may really or nominally belong, to pray that their receptivity may become less inadequate, their watchfulness to hear the still small Voice less slumberous, their obedience to its pure and holy suggestions less unfaithful."

We have come to admit that there is deadness and want of life, apathy, and indifference.

We have become conscious of a need of revival of spiritual life and force. Men have spoken of the need to pray for another Pentecost, a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It has been forgotten too often that the possibility of revival exists in the fact that life *has been* bestowed, and *is there* in the persons of those who have received it. It is there potentially—it needs to be realised, exerted, stirred up. That it is sadly recognised to be only dormant is indeed a call to all who have received the gift to stir it up, and to act as those who once received the Holy Ghost. It is a call to the Church to realise its priesthood.[2] Especially must it be to the laity a call to

[1] *Cf. Letter at Whitsuntide*, 1905, by Bishop of Bristol.

[2] *Cf.* Mason, *Relation of Confirmation and Baptism*, p. 462:

"Confirmation consecrates the Christian to be a priest. As is well known, the word priest is never used in the New

develop by faithful use those powers of service whose neglect has occasioned such palpable failure and conspicuous paralysis of healthy life. "God hath called us unto holiness . . . God hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit." [1]

Reference will be made later to this subject in the chapter on "The Objective in preparation for Confirmation."

(*b*) The next effect of this coming of the Holy Spirit is *enlightenment.*

Testament to describe the Christian minister as contrasted with the Christian layman. It would be a most untrue conclusion from this fact, to argue that there is nothing sacerdotal about the Christian ministry. The truth is that the sacerdotal principle comes in at an earlier point. The Christian minister is a priest; but he is so not in the first instance because he is a minister, but because he is a Christian. . . . Each successive laying on of hands, which promotes the ordinary Christian to be a deacon, the deacon to be an elder, the elder to be bishop, conveys from God a fresh development of the Spirit's indwelling forces, so that the man can do what he could not have done before, and becomes *more* of a priest than he was at a lower stage. But none the less the great division between the priestly race and the rest of mankind begins at Baptism as completed by Confirmation, and not anywhere higher up. No distinction between one full member of the Church and another can be compared to the distinction between those who are baptized and confirmed and those who are not."

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 7, 8.

Life as Christ revealed it consists in the knowledge of the one true God, and of Jesus Christ whom He sent. (*Cf.* St John xvii. 3.)

If life consists in the conscious correspondence of all our God-given faculties with the one object of love, then we must come to *know* God.

If man is fitted to respond, in the fulness of his being to God, with all the faculties of heart, mind, soul and strength—if to be doing this is, as Christ said, to live, then his capacity for knowing God is unbounded. The sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit are bestowed that we may develop all the unexplored possibilities of personal being by a perfect obedience to the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit comes to teach us all things, to lead into all Truth, to take of Christ and show Him unto us, to give us light that we may walk as children of light until we come to know Him even as we are known—to know Him as He is, that we may be like Him.

The knowledge of God to which we can attain is that gradual unfolding of His mind and will, which He vouchsafes to those who "follow on to know the Lord," and of whom men take knowledge that they have been with Jesus. It is that

knowledge which comes by experience of intimate companionship and friendship with One who reveals Himself to a sympathetic and loving friend. It is a knowledge which is hidden from the wise and prudent, but becomes the possession of babes who preserve the child-heart of simple, trustful love. The rudimentary faculty for the knowledge of God is there in all God's children. It needs to be quickened so that they can see and hear and understand. They who are often living in a twilight, in which they can see no more than "men as trees walking," need the healing touch which alone can enable them to discern the infinite varieties of beauty in the Son of Man.

The Holy Spirit is the Revealer of Christ; it is He who comes to

> "Enable with perpetual light
> The dulness of our blinded sight."

The power to see that which is shown depends not only upon the revelation to the beholder, but upon the insight which he possesses. The Holy Spirit comes to give us insight into truth no less than to unfold it to our vision. He comes to open the eyes of the understanding as well as to show Christ unto us.

It has been observed that "the miracle of Pentecost lay not only in the gifts of speech bestowed upon the Apostles, but in the power of every man to hear in that tongue, and in that tongue only, to which he is born; to see with the spiritual vision which he has received or to which he may have grown."[1]

(*c*) For all progress no gift is more requisite than the confidence which is born of the *assurance* that what we are called to do we have the power to fulfil. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."[2]

One marked and abiding effect of the Laying on of hands is the assurance to the confirmed that they have received in God's own way and in God's own time that which He has eternally designed for them.

The gift, as the Prayer in the Confirmation Service expresses it, is "to certify them (by this sign) of Thy favour and goodness towards them." It is everything to a man to know that he has in himself, as a fact, all that he requires for life, for the full realisation of the Christian life under

[1] *National Review*, Nov. 1905, p. 414.
[2] 1 Thess. v. 24.

the conditions of human existence. He then conceives of himself not as a being who is in search of something which is not his; he needs not to wait for a second Pentecost for a further outpouring of the Holy Spirit; he looks not for that "which may possibly some day come to be; he knows that he *has* something which in underlying,—if undeveloped,—reality, already, before God, is."[1]

"For," as St Paul assures us, "ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."[2]

[1] *Cf. Atonement and Personality*, Moberly, p. 265.
[2] Rom. viii. 15–17.

CHAPTER IV

THE PREPARATION—PRELIMINARY STEPS

The recognition of the importance of Confirmation and its place in the Christian system will determine the conduct of the parish priest in his preparation for it.

1. *General Preparation.*—On the assumption that all baptized persons will be confirmed, unless sufficient reason is shown why they should not—such as that they are too young and childish, or unmistakably leading a careless, immoral life, or that they have definitely decided to attach themselves to a nonconformist body—such arrangements will be made by the parish priest that this step may be felt to be the natural one to take.

Thus the teaching given in the Day School will have reference to the event of Confirmation. It will be impossible to teach the Catechism without speaking of the Laying on of

hands as the completion of Baptism and the entrance on the life of the communicant.

In this connection it will be recognised how essential it is that the Catechism should be taught as a whole, and that it should be known to the end at least by the time that the 5th Standard is reached. The fact that the Catechism up to the "Desire" is generally well and thoroughly learnt by children in attendance at Church day schools is no doubt a great thing; but it is a great injustice to them that the latter portion is often very imperfectly known. It is due to a far too common practice of leaving it to the end of their school life, and to regarding it as a sort of appendix, and not the essential and inevitable conclusion of the whole matter. The clergy who may enjoy the inestimable privilege of having a Church school will do well to see that the Catechism is taught in no piecemeal fashion, and that in its explanation, Confirmation is made the event to which from their earliest years children look forward, and for which they are constantly preparing.

Of the priceless opportunity to the clergy

themselves which a Church day school affords, it is impossible to be too emphatic. Where such a school exists, if the supply of candidates for Confirmation is not constant and regular, there can be only one explanation. It is one which may well cause deep searchings of heart to the parochial clergyman. Upon the younger clergy, for whom chiefly this handbook is written, we would impress, with all the force of which we are capable, the value of using the opportunity of regular teaching in the Day school. Not only does it supply an invaluable training ground which will enable them to acquire facility in teaching great truths simply; it affords an unique opportunity for influencing and grounding the children who will before long come into closer touch with them in the Confirmation classes.[1] In the Syllabus of instruction

[1] Speaking of his career as a teacher, Edward Thring in 1886 said:

"The curate life was the foundation of it all in practice. Never shall I forget it, with its teaching work, almost daily in National Schools. Everything I most value of teaching thought, and teaching practice, and teaching experience, came from that. . . . There I learnt the great secret of St Augustine's golden key, which, though it be of gold, is useless unless it fits the wards of the lock;

given in day schools it will be found most useful to include the Service of Holy Baptism and of Confirmation in that portion of the time which is devoted to the Prayer Book. Few candidates will be found more satisfactory than those who have come on from the day schools with this invaluable preparatory training.

Without being constantly obtruded, Confirmation should be the recognised objective of the teaching given in the Sunday Schools. Let all Sunday school teachers be quite clear that the real objective of the Sunday school is the Confirmation class. As the school will in so many instances contain those who have not been in attendance at a Church day school, the teaching of the Catechism must occupy a prominent place. No Sunday school can be considered satisfactory in which every boy and

and I found the wards I had to fit . . . the minds of those little street boys, very queer and tortuous affairs; and I had to set about cutting and chipping myself in every way to try and make myself into the wooden key, which should have the one merit of a key, however common it might look, the merit of fitting the lock, and unlocking the minds and opening the shut chambers of the heart." —*Life and Letters of Edward Thring*, G. R. Parkin, i. p. 48.

girl does not know the Catechism by heart. To secure this desirable end it has been found a good plan to include in the portion learned by heart every Sunday one or two questions and answers in the Church Catechism. It will serve as a useful incentive if the indispensable title for promotion in the school be a knowledge of the "Instruction to be learned of every person, before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop." If this plan be not adopted, it will be discovered, when candidates come up for instruction in the Confirmation classes, that by a great many the Catechism is unknown altogether or forgotten.

In parishes where "the Catechism" has been adopted, strong testimony is forthcoming of its value in training the children for the event of their Confirmation.

In ordinary parochial visiting the clergy will be on the look-out to discover those who are unconfirmed in their districts, and will note their names and addresses.

A list of the unconfirmed should be always on the study table or in the pocket-book. It

will begin with those deferred from past years, and will receive additions through the year, as discoveries are made.

Great point will be given to ordinary parochial visitation if this object is kept steadily and constantly in view, and not merely recalled when the time of Confirmation draws near.

Without directly mentioning the subject, there will be great reason for getting to know these members of the flock intimately. It will then be easier to bring the subject definitely before them when the proper time arrives. Nothing should be taken for granted in the case of those who are previously unknown to the parochial clergy. They are possibly unbaptized and unconfirmed, even though on coming to a new parish they are found to be regularly attending Church services. In visiting such persons it should be easy and natural to ask the question "Where were you confirmed?" or "I suppose then at —— you were confirmed by the Bishop of ——"; and the information so gained will be noted for future use.

2. *Particular Preparation.*—It is essential to

begin the preliminaries of preparation in ample time. The need to devote longer time than formerly, is due to the fact that there is a higher standard of secular education, and improvement in methods of teaching; and that there is a wider and more intelligent interest in religious subjects.

A variety of opinion will be found to prevail as to the time to be allotted to the preparation, but increasing experience will conduct to the view that the longer time given the better it will be. Where possible, three months at least should be devoted to the immediate preparation of the candidates. Before the actual notice of the Bishop's intention to hold a Confirmation for the parish is given out in church and printed in the magazine, the preaching should be tending to prepare for the event. There should be the preaching of converting sermons—sermons, that is to say, which aim at bringing home to souls a conviction of sin, the need of the surrender of the will to God, the helplessness of man without Christ, the Father's claim upon all His children, and man's responsibility for the use of the gift of life.

That the work of preparation must begin with the conversion of souls to God we are certain, when we consider the promise contained in our Lord's words of the first effect to be produced by the Holy Spirit in His working. "And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."[1] To us who are instruments through whom the Holy Spirit works, it is sufficiently clear what the order of sequence and the method of working must be. Those only will desire the strengthening of the Holy Spirit who are first convinced of their need of strength; and this conviction is begotten of the quickened sense of their own weakness. Everything which brings this home to men will dispose them to welcome the invitation to be confirmed.

One immediate and practical result of the preaching of a mission in a parish is invariably the coming forward of a large number of persons desirous of Confirmation. This is so because the inevitable consequence of a conversion of the will and a quickening of the desire for goodness is a yearning for the power to fulfil it, and to

[1] St John xvi. 8.

rise to a new life. In the beginning of a mission the writer was once challenged by an earnest man who was an agnostic socialist, in these terms: "What's the good of this preaching and singing about 'Come to Jesus'? What we working men want is moral strength—the power to say 'No' to our lower nature. That's what we want to get."

When later he came to see that the Gospel contained not merely an invitation which appealed to the emotions, but the promise of real power to live, he was one of the first who resolved to be prepared for Confirmation.

Unless this be the order aimed at there will be eventual disappointment, and many of the confirmed will be found to swell the ranks of the terribly large number of those who are known to us as "lapsed communicants."

One who went to a country parish was confronted with an experience which is all too common. He discovered that, though nearly all the young men had been confirmed, none of them were communicants. When the time for the annual Confirmation drew near he made an appeal for candidates, and preached on the sub-

ject. An old farmer afterwards remarked to him: "Sir, you ought to convert the lads before you ask them to be confirmed!"

If the way has been prepared by the preaching of converting sermons, there will be little cause to complain of a dearth of candidates. If they are not coming forward for Confirmation, it should be an indication to us of what we ought to be quick to note—that we are failing in the direction of which the old farmer spoke so plainly.

On the Sunday on which the notice of the Bishop's intention to hold a Confirmation for the parish is read, it will be a fitting occasion to preach on the subject, covering the ground both of the doctrine and of the objections popularly urged. These should be dealt with quite frankly. Among those most commonly urged are the following:—

(i.) "It is not necessary to be confirmed, because Jesus Christ nowhere commanded it."

No surprise, however, should be felt at the omission of explicit commands by Him on this subject. The Gospels contain no precise direction as to the administration of any Christian

rites, for the simple reason that the same men who wrote in the Gospels of fundamental principles, themselves embodied them in practical action. The Acts of the Apostles are the practical exposition of the teaching which they received from their Divine Master. There is no other possible explanation of their practice save that they followed the directions which He gave them when, after His resurrection, He was constantly "speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God."[1]

In school a class may hear no word of what the master says to the boy beside him, but when they see the boy go and shut the window, they are in no doubt as to what direction was given. So by the accounts which have come down to us of what the Apostles *did* in fulfilling their mission, we can form accurate ideas of the commands which the Master gave. Historic Christianity for two thousand years has continued their practice in this, as in many other matters of which Christ has said nothing to us through the Gospels—*e.g.* the institution of the first day of the week as "the Lord's Day," and the

[1] Acts i. 3.

breaking of the bread on the first day of the week, &c.

(ii.) "The Christian religion is spiritual, and independent of all outward and material means. The Holy Spirit is given to the true believer apart from any human ministers."

To say that the Christian religion is spiritual is, of course, a truism; but since the Founder of it took human nature as the instrument for the Divine purpose, and founded a visible Church composed of living men, as the sphere for its realisation, none can say that the spiritual is not mediated by the material. To insist that religion is *only* spiritual is to draw a fatal and terribly false distinction between religion and life. This is not merely to misunderstand the Christian revelation, it is to obscure the vital relation between religion and everyday conduct, and to invite to the dangerous conclusion that religion is one thing and morality another. The same objection can be pressed so as to do away with the necessity for any sort of expression of religion or of any means of grace.

(iii.) "I can lead a good life without being confirmed. I know many who have been confirmed who are none the better for it."

This is the tone of one, condemned by our Lord, who is thoroughly satisfied with himself that he is righteous and despises others. It is not a modest utterance. It is neither wise nor safe to act upon.

A wilful person may dispense with many things which, if he used them, would do him a great deal of good. A delicate person may choose to go out in the rain without the umbrella which a friend offers. He may escape the inconvenience of dying, but not the judgment of his friends for reckless folly. A man's persistent self-satisfaction is no guarantee of his real security: nor does it warrant him in the expression of an infallible judgment of others. It is no business of the objector to pass judgment upon his fellows, and he certainly has no means of knowing whether they are really better or worse for their Confirmation. Even assuming that the judgment is correct, no such argument holds against the excellence of the gift which they then received; it is only a proof that they have failed to use it aright. A class of individuals, an institution, a nation, is not judged by its failures; *e.g.* we do not say "education is no good" because some

who go to school turn out "no scholars"; nor do we prove the statement by pointing to some men of no education who have proved more successful in life than many who enjoyed its benefits. Things are good or bad according to men's use or misuse of them. The best things are capable of the greatest abuse. *Abusus non tollit usum.*

But there is the other side to the argument. "You know some," it may be said, "who are none the better. I can point you to hundreds of cases in which men and women can ascribe *everything* to the event of their Confirmation. It is surely fairer, as well as wiser, to judge by the good examples rather than by those who are warnings by reason of conspicuous failure."

(iv.) "Confirmation means taking your promises on yourself, and making a public profession of goodness. I don't wish to be a hypocrite and profess what I can't follow out!"

In the first place, Confirmation does *not* mean "taking your promises on yourself," in the sense that they are not already binding upon you. You will never be more bound by your baptismal promises than at this moment. You

do not evade their binding obligation by refusing to be confirmed. The obligation remains, even though you reject the Grace which can empower you to fulfil it. In the second place, Confirmation does *not* mean "making a public profession of goodness"; rather it means an admission of such weakness that without God's special Grace you cannot be good. The invariable reminder given by an aged bishop at every Confirmation was —"Now, remember, no one comes to Confirmation because he thinks himself good, but because he wants to be better."

After dealing with such objections as are thought most real for the Congregation addressed, it will be well to appeal to that generous instinct of loyalty to the Master which may be counted on to be latent in old and young alike. Many instances may be cited which have come into every clergyman's experience. Among them the following may be of interest and value:—

After giving an instruction on the subject of Confirmation in an up-country church in Australia, the preacher was unrobing in the vestry when he heard the heavy tramp of a man coming up

the aisle. In another moment a white-haired old gentleman, who had once been a colonel in the British army, stood before him. In short decisive sentences he said—"I don't know that I ever disobeyed my Sovereign's commands in my life. I don't intend to disobey now. I want to be confirmed!"

Following the sermon, it will be found useful to give an instruction in church to all who are unconfirmed, with an invitation to parents and friends of intending candidates to remain. This general instruction may be continued for two or three Sundays; it presents an excellent opportunity for receiving names of persons who otherwise might not be known, as well as for explaining what course is proposed to be adopted in the preparation. It is important to make it clear at this stage that nothing more is desired than that persons, old and young, who are unconfirmed should avail themselves of the opportunity of learning what Confirmation is. None are at present to be expected to say that they will be confirmed. About so important a step it is neither right

nor prudent that any one should pledge himself without full knowledge of what it involves and why he should take it. The right attitude is rather a readiness to consider the matter, to be instructed about it, and to make it the subject of prayer. It should be pointed out that the present is an excellent occasion for *all* to learn more precisely the things which every Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health; and that any, confirmed or not, will be welcomed who are desirous of availing themselves of it. Many clergy have found the Confirmation classes the best means at their disposal for teaching those whose instruction has been limited in the past, or who have forgotten what they learnt in youth. Those who mainly through lack of knowledge have neglected Holy Communion after their Confirmation will be glad of such a timely chance of receiving instruction. To give an instruction on Sunday evenings primarily for all who are intending to be confirmed, but to which all others are cordially invited as well, has often proved to be in experience an invaluable means of instructing in the elements of religion a wide circle of those for

whom no such opportunity is otherwise provided. The presence of such persons of mature years and of evident earnestness will be a great encouragement to the young, and will help to create an atmosphere of enthusiasm.

The writer strongly recommends the practice he invariably adopts of giving doctrinal instructions every Sunday evening after service throughout the period of preparation. It is an admirable opportunity for gathering all the candidates together, as well as for reaching a wider circle of learners.

The giving out of the notice in church must not be expected to suffice to induce candidates to come forward and give in their names. This will be the proper time to visit households for the purpose, and inquire whether there are any members of the family or among the servants who are unconfirmed, and to have a talk with such on the subject. The District Visitors and Sunday School teachers should be asked in good time to assist in this work, and to supply names of those whom the Clergy may visit. Definite invitations to attend the classes should

now be made to those who have hitherto refused to entertain the idea. It is surprising how old opposition breaks down before a direct appeal at the right time. Parents who have hitherto dismissed the thought of Confirmation for themselves can be approached at a time when one of their children is among the candidates. So in the case of the husband, when the wife is receiving instruction, or *vice versa*. It is most important that all these cases should be the subject of very earnest prayer and intercession throughout the period of preparation.

The preparation of himself for this special work must each year engage the parish priest's serious attention. Confirmation time is a great spiritual crisis in parochial life. No work in the year may be so fruitful or so blessed. It is an opportunity, on the right use of which far-reaching effects will be produced in many lives. How great, then, is the need that the clergy themselves should be thoroughly furnished for the work!

Remembering that it is the time for bringing souls to God, for leading them to a complete

surrender to Him, and that the Holy Spirit deigns to use us as instruments of conversion, we must reassure ourselves of our own conversion.

It is well for us to realise that we cannot lead our people one step farther than we have ourselves travelled, and that the ring of authority in our teaching comes only from the conviction which is based upon actual spiritual experience.

The truth has been expressed by many masters of the spiritual life—by none more directly than the author of *Sacra Privata*.

"We shall never be able to establish the kingdom of God in the hearts of men so long as we do not appear fully persuaded of the truth which we preach;" and again, "it is impossible for any man to teach well who does not live well."

In preparing for the instructions we are to give in classes and in private interviews, we must bear constantly in mind that we are engaged in equipping souls for life. What we teach must be our own: whatever the scheme adopted, the actual teaching given must be the result of the teacher's own conviction and ex-

perience. The leading intention in our preparation of a course of instruction will not be to provide our candidates with a ready-made article, or a compendium of the whole Catholic faith, but a framework into which may be fitted all the materials which the experience of life supplies. It is the great first principles of religion, eternal truths, which we are to help them to grasp,—God, His Being and Nature: Man, his relation to God: Sin and Redemption: Truth and Righteousness: Life and the Power to live.

It will be found, as experience increases, that the instructions given will tend to greater simplicity—and that every year some advance can be made in power to teach great truths more simply. It may seem almost superfluous to urge that one who engages in this work must be perfect master of his tools, and that only by constant use does he keep them sharp. One difference between the amateur and the professional artisan is that the former so seldom keeps his tools sharp, the latter habitually does so.

It cannot be counted sufficient that we have once drawn up a satisfactory series of instruc-

tions. As each year comes round, we shall in all probability be dissatisfied with past results. We shall not bring out old rusted weapons which once did good service. We shall forge new ones, and we shall so strive to prepare ourselves in the handling of them that we may make fuller and more fruitful use of an opportunity on which depends as much the salvation of our own souls as of those we teach and lead.

CHAPTER V

THE CLASS

When all preliminaries have been completed by the giving out of notices in church, by preaching on the subject, and by invitations addressed to individuals during visits to households, it may be assumed that there will be a certain number of candidates for Confirmation. These will be of various ages, sexes, and conditions. It will take some careful thought and patient arrangement to deal with them most conveniently. A rough grouping of the candidates would be—

(*a*) Men over 20 years of age.

(*b*) Lads from 13 to 20 years.

These had better be dealt with in two or more divisions according to the numbers to be instructed, and the times at which their attendance is possible.

(*c*) Women over 20 years.

(*d*) Girls from 13 to 20 years.

The hours for the classes and the days will often be difficult to arrange. But when the convenience of the majority has been considered, the few whom it may not be possible to fit into a class must be prepared privately.

In arranging classes for females it will perhaps be useful to have one for women early in the week during an afternoon, and one for girls later in the week on an evening. If some have been unavoidably prevented from coming to their afternoon class, they may very likely be instructed at the one later in the week, so that consecutive teaching can be secured.

The lads, especially in the towns, will generally present great difficulties in arrangement of classes, especially when they are detained at work or are attending Evening Continuation classes. But these are difficulties incident to modern conditions, and must be dealt with according to the experience of the circumstances prevailing in the particular locality.

For those who for any reason cannot be conveniently taught during the week, Sunday will provide an opportunity; in the case of the men this may be found to be the only time available.

Age of Candidates.

The period at which persons come to "years of discretion" cannot be fixed by any rough and ready calculation. So many different factors need to be considered. On the whole, experience will incline to the conclusion that the older the candidates are, the more satisfactory they will prove. It is clear that the Prayer Book assumes that "years of discretion" are not invariably reached at a very early age.

In the concluding exhortation to Godfathers and Godmothers at the Baptism of Infants, they are bidden to bring the child to the Bishop to be confirmed by him "so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose." This is a condition which might seem at first sight to warrant the Confirmation of children at a very tender age. But in the Service of Confirmation itself the greatest stress is laid upon the moral response which those must make who come to receive the Gift. It is stated that those who have come to "years of discretion" "have learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for

them in Baptism"; and that they are come "that they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things, as they, by their own confession, have assented unto." It is evidently assumed that those who "renew the solemn promise and vow made in their name," have adequate knowledge of its meaning and scope; and that by "ratifying and confirming the same in their own persons, and acknowledging themselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things," they are capable of mature judgment; and are of such stability of purpose that they are competent to enter upon responsible life in the Christian body as full-grown persons and no longer as babes. The reasons for a preference (where possible) of a later age are to be found in the fact that, under the conditions which prevail at present, the majority of the children attending our Day schools receive no definite religious instruction; and for this the attendance in a Sunday school is an inadequate substitute.

So also the wider interest in all religious ques-

tions, and the free discussion of them in the press and in workshops, demands that those who are definitely committed to be witnesses to the truth should, so far as is possible, be "thoroughly furnished."

It is no doubt very tantalising in some cases to postpone Confirmation for a year later, but unless there are clear reasons for not so doing, the delay will, in the majority of instances, prove to be a decided gain. Such good reasons may be found in cases—

(*a*) Where there is clearly a spiritual perception in those who are older than their years.

(*b*) Where the home influences can be trusted to favour perseverance. The wide differences which prevail between candidates of the same age and class are most frequently traceable to the difference of atmosphere, moral and spiritual, in which the children have grown up at home, or which they have encountered at school. If favourable home influences prevail, there will be no hesitation in deciding upon an earlier age.

(*c*) Where there is a really strong desire for this special grace on the part of the candidate, and it is clearly unconnected with desire

of gains of another kind—such as the removal to a higher class, the transference from the status of an ordinary Sunday school scholar to that of a member of a Bible class or Guild, and the very natural ambition of a youngster to rank on an equality with seniors.

(*d*) Where there is knowledge that the child will shortly be leaving home, or change to a situation in which it is doubtful whether facilities will be given for proper instruction. Under such circumstances there may be a strong presumption that Confirmation will be indefinitely postponed if not embraced at the present opportunity. In all such cases the judgment of the parents should be asked and respected. It will be wise to discuss the matter fully with them before the classes begin. Otherwise the clergy will find that the proposal to defer the Confirmation will arouse the anger and jealousy of those who discern in the proposal an unfavourable comparison between their child and others. It will require great courage to face the storm of indignation on the part of the mother who has already so far consented to the girl's wish as to make provision of a new dress in

prospect of the event! This difficulty need not arise if it has been frankly dealt with in good time. The advantages are so obvious in the way of securing regular attendances at the class when the children are at school, and the difficulties so real in arranging times for instruction in the case of boys who have left school and gone to work, that the inducement is strong to present a large number of candidates between the age of thirteen and fourteen years.

In dealing with this difficulty, the personal experience of the writer has led him to include in his instruction classes all those who will have left school before the next year's Confirmation comes round. These are encouraged to attend on the assumption that they will *not* be confirmed at present, but with the object of learning betimes all that they possibly can, and of coming to an early recognition of the greatness and importance of the step which they will ultimately take. This junior preparatory class has been found of the utmost value, as a means of holding together those whom another year it might be difficult to find, as well as of giving that full and definite instruc-

tion which will make it easier to devote their later preparation to the part which can be done independently of a class.

Class Methods

At the first class the candidates should be made to realise the seriousness of the undertaking, and should understand at the outset what course the preparation will follow,—viz. that it is to be wholly unlike an ordinary class either in Sunday school or the Evening Continuation school.

It is essential to create the right atmosphere, and from the first to secure a devotional attitude towards the subject. For this reason it will be found advisable where possible to hold the classes in the Church or in the Vestry. It will be difficult, either in the study or the schoolroom, to rid the minds of the candidates of the sense that this is to be really different to any other class which they have yet attended.

After solemn words of introduction, ask them to kneel down and say with you the *Veni Creator*, or a hymn to the Holy Ghost, such as 209 A. and M. Then repeat the prayer in preparation for Confirmation printed on a card which has been given to them. The attitude which

every effort must be made to induce them to adopt is that of earnest, confident expectation of the Gift which God is preparing to give them, and which they are preparing to receive. It is that earnest expectancy which will find expression in persevering prayer. "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."[1] It must be impressed upon them that everything which is said in class by way of instruction is to help them to use and appropriate to themselves, by their own effort in assimilation, the Gift which means Life itself. An appeal should be made to them to make the best and most fruitful use of the limited time at their disposal, by being prepared to make sacrifices in order to attend regularly and punctually. It will encourage such efforts on their part if, when they arrive, they find the priest already there, who by his presence will check any attempt at general conversation. There is no greater inducement to punctuality

[1] St Luke xi. 9, 10.

among scholars of all ages than punctuality in teachers. Nothing so seriously militates against the attitude of that quiet devotional reverent expectation, of which we are thinking, as the arrival of the clergyman, hurried and flurried, in the midst of a class, which has been occupied, even for a few minutes, in general conversation. It is an old saying full of truth,—"running to church means being late for church!"

It will allay misapprehensions in the minds of some who attend the class if they are told that, whilst they are expected to know the Catechism, they will not be required to pass any examination. Some have been met with who seriously believe that they will be examined by the Bishop before the whole congregation, and that he will not be satisfied unless they can repeat the Catechism from end to end! While disabusing them of such a notion, they should be set to work to learn it again so as the better to understand the instructions which will be given.

It is of prime importance that confidence should be established as early as possible between teacher and taught. Let them realise that from this time onwards their teacher is entirely

at their service; and that he will be only too pleased to explain privately whatever difficulties may occur to them, either through what they hear in class or outside it, or in their own study of the Prayer Book and Bible. The thought of asking such questions before others will be abhorrent to their minds: therefore they should be told that opportunity will be given them for interviews, and that any difficulties which occur to them in their thoughts on the subject, now introduced to them, may be written down so as not to be forgotten at the time of the interview. It will be a great thing if they can realise how interested their teacher is in this critical event in their lives. No pains should be spared to make the classes interesting and attractive, so that nothing is looked forward to so eagerly as the next week's class, and that as a result the candidates become stirred with an enthusiastic aspiration to be confirmed. These precepts of an experienced teacher may well be constantly present to the mind of any who conducts a Confirmation class: —"Be gentle, and attract. Never scold. Never drive. Put out all your powers to draw them to yourself, so that through you they may be

led nearer to God. Be strictly impartial, and have no favourites."

In the opening class the ground covered by the preliminary instruction in church should be gone over again.

In drawing attention to the Service of Confirmation in the Prayer Book, the candidates should be specially urged to study it carefully by themselves. It will be natural, in pointing out the explanation of the service there given, as "the Laying on of hands upon those that are baptized," to ask them to ascertain when and where they were baptized, and who are their Godparents. It may be assumed that they will be interested to know that their Godchildren are going to be confirmed, and will desire to come if possible to the Confirmation. All should be asked to bring written answers to these questions by the next time. These questions will not infrequently result in the discovery that in some cases Holy Baptism has been omitted, or that great uncertainty prevails as to the event.[1] They

[1] In the diocese of Bristol it is the invariable practice of the Bishop to sign his name to the memorial card of each candidate, on which is recorded the date and place of

should be told in general terms at this stage what a time of preparation for Confirmation implies—

(1) *It is a time to receive.*

Therefore it is a time for special effort in prayer. No time should be lost in speaking quite plainly on this subject, and it will be well to tell them what particular prayers to include in their daily prayers—*e.g.* the *Veni Creator*, or other hymn selected, and the prayer printed on a card which should be given to each one at the conclusion of the first class, if not already given after the instruction on Sunday in church.

(2) *It is a time to learn.*

A gift is of no value to those who have not learnt what it is, to what purposes it is to be applied, and how it may best be used. So they will be urged to make the utmost use of the instructions, in order that they may come to a knowledge of the Gift, and of

Baptism by the parish priest who presents the candidate. The task of supplying this information is facilitated by the willingness of the parochial clergy to supply information as to date of baptisms from their baptismal registers to their brethren who apply for it. It insures at least that one great precedent condition has been complied with in the case of those presented for Confirmation.

the responsibilities, duties, and privileges which attach to its reception. All that the Christian profession means and involves must come within the scope of their inquiry; they must therefore supply on their part a willingness to learn and an alertness to perceive the meaning of what is taught.

(3) *It is a time to know self.*

The desire for the Gift will grow in the degree in which their real state of need is perceived and a conviction of their own helplessness is deepened. The answer which each will ultimately be able to make to the question—"Why should I be confirmed?"—will be found when the personal need of strength to live is realised. It must therefore be a time of thorough self-examination. As this will be an exercise of which the great majority will have very slight knowledge indeed, a few plain questions should be given to them, which they are asked to put solemnly to themselves when they say their prayers, *e.g.*:—

"Have I wilfully committed any sin—lying, dishonesty, impurity, or anything of which I feel ashamed?"

"Do I habitually put duty first?"

"Have I always said my prayers?"

"How have I said them?"

"Is there any bad habit which I know I ought to give up?"

"Have I ever been afraid to stand up for what I knew to be right? Am I ashamed to do so now?"

"Where am I inclined to give way to what is wrong? Where am I weak?"

"In what am I unlike Christ my Master?"

The object of such questions should be pointed out to them—viz. that their Confirmation may be an intense reality; for without a clear sense of their weakness there can be no real desire for strength. The purpose of this time of preparation is that they may come to such definite knowledge of their own helplessness that they may be able to ask for the particular Grace which they need, and which God alone can give.

Whatever the subject of instruction in subsequent classes, the practical conclusion will always be to bring home to the mind, conscience, and will of each candidate the conviction of this essential need of their souls. It will be found

useful to give them a few written questions at the end of each class, to which they should be encouraged and urged to bring written answers next time. These should obviously be quite simple, and such as even a slight attention to the subject will enable them to answer. It is often possible to induce them to jot down a few notes at the time of class with Bible references and main headings. Where shyness will prevent individuals from making this attempt, something will be gained if they are supplied with paper on which to write down from dictation such references or sentences which summarise the main points of the instruction.

The utmost simplicity should be aimed at, and only a very few essential truths emphasised at a time with all classes. It will be safe to assume, as a general rule, that the higher the social status of the candidates, the less they will in all probability know about the elements of the Christian Religion.

A scheme of the subject-matter of such instruction will be found in the Appendix.

CHAPTER VI

PRIVATE INTERVIEWS

Valuable as the class is as a means of giving instruction to Confirmation candidates in "the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health," it is indispensable that this general instruction be emphasised and supplemented by individual attention bestowed upon each candidate in private interviews.

The main object of such interviews is to come into that close touch with individuals, which will help each one to apply to his or her personal life that particular message which God purposes to convey at this critical time of decision.

It is also essential to discover how much of the teaching given in class the candidates of such varied abilities and conditions are able to assimilate.

It may be pretty generally taken for granted

that a considerable portion of the teaching is either misunderstood or forgotten as soon as given; that it makes no impression and awakens no response at the time. The interview is invaluable as a means of insuring that at least the main essentials are thoroughly grasped. The things said in a private interview stick, if well pointed.

It will be well if the ground be broken as soon as possible; and there should be no delay in arranging to see each candidate at an early date after the first class. In this preliminary interview there should be a definite objective.

Note down in full the name, age, address, and occupation of the candidate. Ascertain what amount of previous knowledge of the subject has been gained—*e.g.* whether brought up in a Church day school or not, and whether in attendance at the Sunday school or Bible class regularly.

It will be an obvious comment to make that they should try to make use of every available means of learning as much as possible about the important subjects which are now under consideration. The possible gaps in religious knowledge

occasioned by irregular attendance or non-attendance at Sunday classes, whether in Sunday school or Bible classes, may now be at least in part repaired. And even in those cases where no such failures exist, it will be natural to insist upon the importance of doing better what has been hitherto well done, and of bringing into every department of life a conscious effort to be at their very best.

The definite answer to the question as to whether they have been baptized or not, when, where, and by whom, should be noted down.

The subject of their Private Prayers should next be approached, and the definite question asked whether they are in the habit of saying their prayers regularly both morning and evening. This question will be introduced in obvious relation to the insistence made in the opening class on the fact that Confirmation is a time to receive from God, and that the first condition for receiving from Him is that we ask. It will be found that only a small proportion, as a rule, are in the habit of saying prayers in a morning. This admission will lead to some simple explana-

tion of what prayer really means; and will introduce them, probably for the first time, to the conception of it as the natural expression of the child's relation to the Father. This will be the opportunity for questioning them further as to what their ordinary prayers consist of; and in a great number of instances it will be discovered that the substance as well as the form of their prayers has remained unaltered since earliest childhood. It will be found useful to present them at the end of this interview with the book of prayers and devotions which is generally given to Candidates on the eve of their Confirmation. Experience shows that it is an immense gain for them to learn to use and value such a help right through the period of their preparation. The writer has a strong preference for that admirable little book *The Narrow Way*.[1] The prayers are simple, and can be easily expanded by those who use them. This manual also contains admirably condensed explanations of what will form the main sub-

[1] *The Narrow Way*, being a complete Manual of Devotion with a guide to Confirmation and Holy Communion. J. Whitaker & Sons.

jects of instruction, together with a number of well-selected texts.

In any case, whatever be the book preferred, it will be a great point gained if each candidate, whether he proceeds to Confirmation or not, becomes the possessor of such a help in this greatest spiritual exercise of prayer.

The book may very well be given to them at the end of the interview, with the request that they will become acquainted with its contents, and then, at the next interview (if they find it helpful), their name shall be written therein.

Where the number of candidates is not too great, a private interview should be secured after each class. In many cases this may not be possible; but it may be safely asserted that no expenditure of time in preparing candidates for their Confirmation will prove more fruitful than that spent in such individual dealings with them.

Self-Examination

Before the preparation has advanced far, attention must be specially directed to the answer which they are to make to the Bishop's ques-

tion. To each one the answer given should have a special and particular meaning: what will it mean in their case individually? in what particular way has the promise binding on them since Baptism been broken? where have they given way to those forces which have assailed them: the world, the flesh, and the devil? in what direction do they feel a need to advance? what spiritual graces are conspicuously lacking? These queries should be put to them, not because the questioner desires to know the answer, but because he wishes *them* to know. The last thing they will desire is that there should be any unreality in their renewal of that solemn promise; but unreal it will be unless they know what they mean in saying it, and say what they mean when they know it. At the first inquiry there will, in all probability, be elicited the response, "I don't know;" or "There are so many things I want to be better in, there's nothing particular that I can think of"! This will be an introduction to a plain talk on the indispensable value and meaning of self-examination:—*e.g.* "You are coming to be confirmed—that is, to be strengthened. That is to say, you are weak

somewhere, possibly in many particulars: you are inclined to give way more readily to some temptations—you have got some weak spot; but where? That is the object of this time of preparation—that you may find out now, so that you may ask God for the particular strength which you need, and may then apply the strength which He gives. In order to find out where you are weak, you need to know where you have allowed yourself to be weakened by doing things which you ought not, or neglecting to do what you ought. You can only get to know this by going back and examining your life from the earliest times you can remember. If you really want to know, and if you ask God to help you to remember, He will show you. You will have no doubt as to whether you ought to be confirmed or not, if you become convinced of your need of strength. Therefore begin a real, thorough self-examination."

The questions given to them at the first class should be referred to, and they should be definitely shown how to set about what is the hardest work which their preparation demands

of them. Nothing will assist them more than a few well-chosen questions on the Ten Commandments, adapted to the age and circumstances of the individual candidates. In giving these to them it is important to make clear what the real object of such self-knowledge is — that object must be the real, whole-hearted surrender of themselves to the Jesus Who gave up Himself for them, and Who now honours them by the loving invitation to become His life-long disciples. It must be the Conversion of their wills to their personal Saviour which is the supreme objective.

The admission by them of some trifling thing, as it seems to them, will be the occasion for deepening this conviction of sin:—*e.g.* "I occasionally give way to hasty temper." "Well," we may ask, "and what causes that? You lose your temper, perhaps, because you are found fault with, or because you are not noticed. Isn't that Pride at the bottom? Self wants to be first. Isn't that Selfishness? Or perhaps you lose your temper because you are told to do something which you don't want to do at the moment, or not to go somewhere, &c., and temper then takes the form of Disobedience. Weren't

these just the things which crucified Jesus Christ? Aren't you, in so losing your temper, saying in effect exactly what they said who rejected Him—'We will not have this man to reign over us'?"

Or it may be an admission of neglect to say morning prayers. "But what then," it may be said, "of the respect which every child of God owes to Him? What would be thought of the child who lives at home, finds everything provided there which he needs, and yet takes no notice of father and mother? He gets up, comes down to breakfast, and never says even 'Good morning'!—wouldn't that be an unnatural and ungrateful son? How much more is it unnatural and ungrateful to take all God's rich blessings, and then insult Him by this graceless neglect? 'I never gave it a thought,' you say. Very likely; but that was because your thoughts were centred on yourself: they didn't include Him. You omitted prayer at night because you were too tired, or in the morning because you were too lazy to get up. Perhaps you had better see whether in many other things you are more inclined to choose what you like rather than what you ought to do. You

will probably discover that thoughtlessness in this matter goes with self-indulgence in other matters. That is why you must examine yourself thoroughly and carefully."

When the meaning and object of self-examination has been explained, the candidate will need further help in coming to a real conviction of sin. If the preparation for Confirmation contributes to such a result, we can be satisfied that the foundation at least has been laid, upon which the spiritual life of the individual can be built. Though the coming to such conviction is essentially the work of the Holy Spirit, we must realise that the time of preparation for Confirmation is one of the greatest opportunities, and the priest who deals with and instructs the candidate is His special instrument. We cannot allow ourselves to be satisfied about the fitness of candidates whom we present to the Bishop for the Laying on of hands until we have real reason for believing that they have come to realise their personal need of forgiveness, and as a consequence the indispensable need of that strength which the Holy Spirit comes to impart to

enable them to advance in holiness and godliness of living.

The secret of the lack of that fruitfulness in the spiritual life which we deplore so constantly in professing Christians is due, as every master of the spiritual life teaches us, to the want of real conviction of sin. "Those who . . . are brought into closest relations with the personal experience of their fellows, would probably not hesitate long if called upon to say what they believed to be the greatest need in the religious life of to-day. They would say that it is the need for a deeper penitence."[1] It behoves us therefore at such a time as Confirmation preparation to be faithful in our teaching of Repentance, for until our candidates come to a realisation of the power and sweetness of God's pardoning love, they will never possess that confidence in His strengthening and enabling love, which more than anything else is essential for perseverance in well-doing through life.

Early in their preparation, attention should be directed to the Bishop's prayer, which imme-

[1] *Cf. The Personal Life of the Clergy*, by A. W. Robinson, chap. iii. p. 33.

diately precedes the Laying on of hands:— "Almighty and everliving God, Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, *and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins;* Strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter. . . ." This prayer makes clear what are the two great precedent conditions for receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation. The assumption is definitely stated that assurance of Forgiveness of sins has been gained *before* coming to the Laying on of hands.

The teaching of the Church on the meaning of Repentance and Forgiveness should be frankly and simply given in class; and they should be referred to the Exhortation in the Holy Communion Service: "Because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience; therefore if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of

God's Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."

In the Order for the Visitation of the Sick, the following explicit directions are given in the Exhortation:—

"And forasmuch as after this life there is an account to be given unto the righteous Judge, by Whom all must be judged, without respect of persons, I require you to examine yourself and your estate, both toward God and man; so that, accusing and condemning yourself for your own faults, you may find mercy at our heavenly Father's hand for Christ's sake, and not be accused and condemned in that fearful judgment."

And in the Rubrics which follow we read:—

"Then shall the Minister examine whether he repent him truly of his sins. . . ." and—

"Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special Confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which Confession, the Priest shall absolve

him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort."

All this must be faithfully and fearlessly handled; but always with honest respect to the individual conscience. It cannot be too emphatically stated that in any private interview, when this subject is dealt with, the great object must be to help candidates to realise their individual responsibility towards God in the matter. In this task we are God's ministers, responsible to awaken, to enlighten, and instruct the consciences of His children, and to point them to the means for quieting conscience when burdened with any weighty matter. It is our duty to leave no room for doubt as to the means by which Absolution and the assurance of Forgiveness can be secured; but having done so, we must leave to individuals the responsibility of deciding whether they humbly and heartily desire such help.

In the case of the young and impressionable the practice of Confession should not be urged; it is one of those things which must be left to their discretion when their minds are capable of more mature judgment. When it is said that

it must not be *urged*, nothing more is meant than that it must not be taught as a necessary preliminary to Confirmation, or anything more than a special remedy adapted to special needs and exceptional cases. Among many clear directions by those in authority on a matter that it is difficult to introduce without provoking controversy, none seem to us more precise and helpful than those given by the late Bishop of London. "The practice of confession," he wrote, "can only become habitual if it is required as a necessary preliminary for the reception of the Holy Communion. This it can never be in the Church of England, and I do not think that the temper of the English people is such that they are ever likely to accept it voluntarily to any large extent. I consider that its general adoption would show a weakening of the moral fibre of the English character." After an interview with one of his clergy, he wrote: "Let me put on record my requests to you this morning.

"1. That you should not give to candidates for Confirmation any literature concerning Confession.

"2. That you should not urge upon them Confession as a preliminary for Confirmation.

"3. That you should not give them any teaching on the subject beyond what is contained in the Book of Common Prayer."

When the difficulty of carrying out these injunctions literally was expressed, he wrote again: "The teaching of the Church of England about preparation for Holy Communion is clear. It prescribes — (1) Self-Examination; (2) Confession to God; (3) Restitution and satisfaction to man.

"This is universal, but if any one cannot quiet his own conscience, he may come for advice and absolution.

"The important point is that the last course should be left to the individual who chooses it. No clergyman in preparing candidates for Confirmation may teach that the exceptional method is normal. It is one thing to awaken the conscience, it is another thing to undertake to quiet it for some one else."[1]

In all private interviews, in which it will be inevitable sooner or later that the candidates

[1] *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton, D.D.*, vol. ii. p. 365.

will speak with more or less candour about their temptations and sins, it should be made plain to them that such conversation about their difficulties is one thing; praying to God about them, and confessing their actual sins to Him, is another. Whatever transpires in a private interview of this nature is only a help to make clearer what must be taken by them to God, and it can under no circumstances be regarded as a substitute for so doing. After such conversation, when they may have touched on the main trouble in their lives, they should kneel down and tell it direct to God in their own words.

Under all circumstances the interview should end with prayer together, by which they will be helped more than by any other means to learn how to bring to God the special needs of their soul.

It will be found a great help in forming a right judgment of the characters of the candidates, to get to know their homes and parents well. Knowledge so gained will be invaluable in personal dealings with their children. Though the co-operation of parents be enlisted, the

chance of winning a lad's or a girl's confidence must not be imperilled by any suspicion that pressure is being exerted at home. But anything which can be learnt regarding the way in which the candidate is trying to use the time of preparation well, will be most useful in conducting private interviews. These must depend upon individual characteristics, and the course they take will turn upon the judgment formed of their character and disposition. No rules can be formulated, for each candidate will require separate treatment. Again and again we are baffled in our efforts at such times. There are the apparently hopelessly unresponsive ones who will not uncoil, and from whom no answers can be enticed. This is due in part to natural shyness and in part to the dread of the mysterious personality of the parson, and the overwhelming sense of the gravity of the crisis. That natural reticence of the Englishman about his religion is peculiarly trying at a time when we are specially anxious to help, but it is worthy of more respect than we always accord it.

Then there are the flippant ones, who appa-

rently take the opportunity presented by an interview to shock one who is so obviously in deadly earnest. This type of candidate will have the utmost satisfaction in recounting the entire interview to the friends who are waiting their turn. It will be disconcerting to such if the first topic introduced is not at all serious, and the common touch of nature is found over a collection of birds' eggs, or butterflies, or stamps, picture postcards, or anything of that kind. When they come for the next interview there will be no friends waiting outside, and the serious part will have begun with less delay than if the first interview had committed them to a course which only love of mischief induced. With such cases, repeated questioning and catechising is useless—only patience, tact, and love of their souls will win that confidence which will enable real help to be given them.

There are certain subjects which can only be dealt with in a private interview, although they may have been generally handled in the class. With both male and female candidates Confirmation time presents practically the only

opportunity for giving help and warning concerning conduct in the most important relationships of their life, about which there is a general reluctance to say anything.

Among such subjects is that of friendships, and especially those which are formed between those of opposite sexes.

To the young and unmarried priest this subject will present such difficulty that he will be wise to leave it alone; but at the same time it must be dealt with by some one, or else the circumstances of life which are most pregnant of consequences will remain untouched.

It will be within the knowledge of all those who are familiar with the conditions which prevail in our large industrial cities and towns that the life of the young is chiefly lived in the streets. Our cities are full of boys and girls who play in the streets. Up to a certain age boys and girls play on even terms and join in rough-and-tumble "fun," as it is called. "Lassies is like lads i' this place" was a philosophic remark of a lad in one of our northern towns; and it is a true description of what girls, under certain circumstances, are found to be in many

places. Later on, the instinct of sex separates them, as it does the boys, into gangs. Very often such a gang of girls will be found "hunting" the boys, forcing themselves upon their notice, and attracting attention by means that cannot be called gentle. It is all characterised as "only having a bit of fun;" and many a girl of fourteen, in spite of having a good home and eminently respectable parents, has not emerged from this stage when she becomes a candidate for Confirmation.

Where it is possible, (and where is it not possible?),—the assistance of some wise lady should be secured who will give the class of girls a straight talk on the subject, with particular reference to dress, manners, behaviour in public, and the formation of friendships; and if she, together with others such as G.F.S. associates, can afterwards see the girls individually, the good will be considerable.

They will be told by such that it is unwise and inexpedient for them to have friends at this early age with those of the other sex: their friends should be girls, and their friendships should be based on the mutual desire to help one another to be more worthy children of God.

A friendship which does not lead to a better, purer, nobler life will make the walk of the child of God more difficult as life advances.

In the matter of dress and finery, while it will be freely admitted that every girl has a right to appear at her best, the endeavour to do so becomes selfish when it leads to spending money which ought to go either to help the home or to be given to God; it becomes immodest when it leads to attracting attention or courting admiration.

Whether such things be said by the priest who is preparing them, or by the wise lady who is his assistant, the endeavour will be to uplift the ideal which will govern their taste and control their conduct, so that each girl will be led to have a juster appreciation of self-respect. As one who, by right of her womanhood, is set to be a queen and to exercise sway and influence by her lofty character and gentle bearing, she will jealously guard and treasure that chastity which is a pearl of so great price, lest in herself or any of her sisters it be trampled in the mire of degradation and shame.

In dealing with men and lads there must be

no shirking of the question of purity. There is no need to hesitate about a matter which for all of them has to be faced sooner or later; and it is only a false modesty which induces us to pass it by. Morbid treatment of the subject by hints and innuendos is as harmful as useless. The majority have no wish to go wrong, and would be gladly saved from themselves. In many cases the hesitation to go forward to Confirmation is due to the sense of shame which is felt either from the realisation of the strength of passions within them, which they fear they will be unable to control, or from that bitter knowledge of indulged sin which still haunts them. We owe it to them to give at such a time the best help which it is in our power to provide. We owe it to ourselves to bear our witness in no hesitating manner. It will be a good plan to speak fully on the subject to the whole class, whether it be of men or lads, and in subsequent interviews to discover whether they need any special help.

As an aid in dealing generally with this difficult subject some notes of an address to lads is here appended.

Notes of an Address to Lads.

1 Thess. iv. 3–8.

You are all entering on manhood. You want to be true men. At this particular stage you are about to enter into the full enjoyment of Christian manhood. It is a wonderful and a glorious thing that the decision to enter on it and to walk in it so as to please God rests with each individual man. Christ has shown us "how we ought to walk and to please God" by living a perfect life under the conditions, and subject to all the temptations, which are common to men. He has exhibited to us the ideal which must be, for the Christian, the working model of daily conduct. He has shown us how we *ought* to walk by manifesting the truth about our human nature. His Incarnation is the final assurance that our human nature is given to be the shrine of the Divine Presence. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you" (1 Cor. vi. 19).

"We are therefore called," St Paul says, "unto holiness." God has made us capable of holiness, for He has made us in His own image or likeness. We are to reflect that likeness by our personal response in holiness of living. That is

a responsibility which attaches to us by the fact of being born men. We cannot evade it. We are responsible for our life, and in particular for the use we make of our bodies. That is why St Paul says, "glorify God therefore in your body." God has entrusted them to our keeping, and given to us the disposal of them. Just because we are His sons, He expects us to be like Him. We owe it to Him: we owe it to ourselves to make a complete response in the fullest capacity of our being to His Nature.

Now it must cause us no surprise that to make such response, to walk in holiness as we ought, involves us in severe conflict. Goodness, likeness to God,—Holiness, is attainable only by fighting the good fight.

The capacity for holiness which God has given does not exclude the capacity also for unlikeness to Him. Though we have been born anew and made members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of His kingdom, we are still possessed of that sinful nature which we inherited at birth. The new nature will only grow and be perfected as the old is mortified and gradually put to death in us. As all carnal affections die in us, so only will all things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in us. And this cannot be without conflict, severe, sustained, and

resolute. This is a truth we are little inclined to recognise at the beginning of life.

We are indeed, though heirs, surrounded by enemies, who would rob us of the crown of life and dispossess us of our rightful inheritance. There is an enemy with whom we must reckon and fight at close quarters—our own nature; and that bodily nature must be subdued, or it will subdue us. There are sinful lusts belonging to it which, as St Peter says, "war against the soul"; such lusts become sinful if indulged to excess or contrary to God's laws. As soldiers of Jesus, we are expected to fight this good fight and to go on fighting until we win it. The fight is so arduous that many a young soldier despairs of winning: and to despair is to fall. We had better therefore face the facts as bravely and as fearlessly as we can. There they are, the enemies which you are set to subdue—the sinful lusts, appetites, or desires of your bodily nature. They force themselves on your notice; they belong to a part of your nature which at this period of life especially begins to be strong. You must not be surprised to find them there, because you are a being called "man," with a nature which you share with the animal creation. The great difference between you and all other animals is that, while they find the satisfaction of their bodily appetites by obeying "in-

stinct," you are to find the satisfaction for your true nature by governing all your actions by the faculty of will. You are a "moral" being—one whose course of action is decided by the will. Those passions or lusts of your bodily nature are to be governed and subdued by your higher self. That is, you are to learn by habits of discipline to govern self, to gain self-mastery; or as St Paul says here, "that each one of you know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of passion." We are, in a word, to learn to gain the mastery over the body, which is a vessel to enshrine the Divine Spirit, and for that reason is meant to be the object of profound reverence, never the instrument for indulgence of animal passion. The possession of a governing, directing will is a tremendous capacity; it is by possession of it that you are a man. When a man loses control over himself and is governed by his lower nature, he sinks below the level of an animal; he does not by self-indulgence become a beast, but a devil. The devil enters in, and makes that holy Temple a hell!

But, thank God, it is the glory of your manhood that you have the power of "dominion." Your first duty, then, is to respect yourself. It is a duty which arises from the fact that you possess that which is infinitely worthy of respect—

human nature. You may judge how worthy of all reverence it is when you consider that God Himself took human nature, "became Flesh," to make it the shrine of His Divine Being, and through it to reveal to us what it is to be a man.

The respect you show to self will be declared by making your true self the master of your being. This self-respect will determine you to take care of your body; to develop it by exercise, and to perfect it so far as your capacities allow. You will therefore strive always to keep it clean, healthy, pure.

You will specially *keep it pure within.* Bodily cleanliness is only a natural sign of purity of heart. Purity is not only of the body, because man has mind and spirit as well. He may have a dirty mind and an unclean spirit. He must be "white inside,"—a white man right through. Recognise this as a duty which you owe to yourself, and you will be careful that nothing impure is allowed a place within the sacred Temple of your being. You will not allow sacred things to become the subject of impure thoughts, or loose talk, or shameful acts. Remember the most sacred thing in your possession is God's gift of Life. Never forget that God gave it you through a woman, your own mother; it came to you out

of that union in love between her and your father which God blessed, though, at cost of great pain and suffering to her. "Thou art my God, even from my mother's womb."[1] There is, as a consequence of that event of your birth, a bond between you and your mother which links you to God Himself, and which makes her more to you than all else you will ever love. That event of birth, then, is sacred: and everything connected with it must be always sacred in your eyes. For God's sake and for your mother's sake, it must be so. Do you think you could remember this, and then allow such matters to be the subject of dirty talk and filthy jests among low-minded, foul-mouthed lads and men? To have a part in such talk would be a vile insult hurled at the mother who bore you.

It is true, dirt cannot always be avoided. But if you have any proper self-respect, you don't walk into it deliberately when you see a heap there in the streets: still less do you go and lie down in it like an unclean animal. But that is exactly what lads do when they get together and talk filth with dirty-minded boys; or when they feed their minds with the nasty thoughts which nasty minds have written; or when they let the devil lead them to impure

[1] Ps. xxii. 10.

acts of any kind. If you are healthy-minded and wise, you will avoid all dirt: you will keep it outside, and never willingly bring a particle of it inside the sacred Temple of your nature. Dirt breeds disease, and those who harbour it unfit themselves for life; they are dangerous to other people, and they are an abhorrence to God. As you honour God, as you love your mother, as you prize your manhood, avoid all dirt in whatever form you may meet it.

It will help you if you realise that the possession of "lusts," appetites, desires, means no more than that you are a creature with a human nature: but they do not become "sinful" until you follow them and are led by them. Thoughts will come, but you need not welcome them, nor detain them. Desires will stir in you: but you need not indulge them. You need not become the victim of your lower nature. You have a higher nature, and you have conscience as its witness within you. Let it govern you. Do not believe the devil when he tells you through some low-minded companion, perhaps older than yourself, that because those desires come, it is "natural" for you to indulge them. It is not "natural" for the child of God to obey sinful lusts. It is unnatural for you as God's child to abuse yourself, to unfit your-

self to be a man, to ruin yourself. It is not natural to make a hell of the Temple of God. To allow such a possibility is to choose the devil as your father and your lusts as your master. As the soldier of Jesus Christ it is natural for you to fight against the enemy of your life, and to die fighting rather than yield. I said, "it is natural for you as the soldier of Jesus Christ." Think what this means.

A soldier must be "fit."

He cannot be fit for the campaign without hard exercise. Then keep your body fit by healthy, hard exercise. Find the outlet for your splendid energy in drill or in games. Don't be a loafer or shirk hard work either on the football field or in the gymnasium, or whatever be the form of exercise you prefer.

The soldier must be keen.

His mind must be set on his work. The soldier of Christ needs to occupy his mind, else he will have idle thoughts which will lead him astray. Read good healthy books: read about the brave, strong, heroic men who have done manly deeds, and lived clean straight lives. Let your mind be filled with noble thoughts, and then you will have no taste for what is low and base.

The soldier must follow his leader.

You must follow Jesus, your great Captain,

He is your Leader; He is your Comrade; He alone can help you. Keep close to Him. He has conquered in your nature, and He gives to you in yourself the power of His own victorious Manhood. Therein lies the secret of the Christian soldier's strength. It is not in himself but in Christ, Who is in him the hope of glory.

You are now coming to receive His own Spirit. Keep close to Him, then, by prayer—by Communion with Him through that great Sacrament to which Confirmation conducts, by which He touches you with His own strong Hand. There is a beautiful story of a young man who was saved in an hour of deadly temptation, which ends with this comment: "It is not so easy to ruin him with whom the pressure of Christ's Hand yet lingers in the palm."[1] It is this truth which, please God, you will prove in constant experience.

Your union with Him, your great victorious Captain, is your true and abiding strength. He will not leave thee until He has done that which He has spoken to thee of. (Gen. xxviii. 15.)

He has not called you with this holy calling in order to ensnare you, but that you may through Him and with Him win the crown of life. Be true, then, to your Baptism. Be true to yourself. Be true to Him.

[1] *John Inglesant*, by J. H. Shorthouse, p. 337. (Macmillan & Co.)

CHAPTER VII

THE OBJECTIVE OF CONFIRMATION

As the preparation of the candidates advances, and especially as they come to a realisation of the great duties and privileges which attach to life, there should be a growing clearness as to what it is for which they need to be strengthened with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and to be endowed to the full with His manifold Gifts of grace. In the minds of those who prepare them there must be a strong grasp of the objective. That objective may be stated in the words of our Lord Himself: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (St John x. 10). They are to be enabled to enter on all the duties of life, and to play strenuously that part in it which the loving call of God has assigned to them, individually and collectively. From the outset they must be helped to look upon Confirmation as only

a means to this great end, and to see it in its relation to the whole scheme of life. No pains should be spared to bring home to them the absolute and inevitable connection between Religion and Life. The instructions should be consciously directed to the convincing conclusion that the scope of Religion and Life is identical, and that they can never be separated even in thought without missing the meaning of both. As life has been perfectly manifested in Jesus, the Son of Man, it is seen to be realised in the full, unhindered, and conscious direction of all human faculties in the service of God. The meaning of man's life in the flesh Godward is contained in that statement which is the epitome of the life of Jesus—"I am come to do the will of Him that sent Me." But that will of God was fulfilled by devoting Himself to the service of man. In all the varying conditions of human life—in the home, the family, the state—the energies of His manhood were employed in going about "doing good." The account which He gave of Himself was, "I am among you as He that serveth;" "for their sakes I sanctify Myself." And that life of

service was not completed until, by laying it down for His friends, He could say, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do."[1]

Such a time as a preparation for Confirmation should enable all candidates to regard the Gospel of Jesus Christ as indeed a Gospel of Life, applicable to every condition, and to be realised in actual life here and now. They should see that in the light of Christ's Gospel there is a purpose to be worked out for the individual and for the Church: that in proportion as the purpose is consciously pursued, lives will be effective, fruitful, and, in the true sense of the word, successful. The gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed to enable them to live the life to which from the day of their baptism they have been called. His manifold gifts of grace are bestowed to empower them to fulfil their mission in the world. There is necessary for the attainment of this purpose, first and obviously, the willing surrender of themselves to God, and the conscious enjoyment of their life in personal union with Him. All that concerns the

[1] St John xvii. 4.

deepening of the spiritual life is of fundamental importance. Life for man is to be conscious union with God, and everything by which that union may be realised is therefore essential, such as Prayer, Bible study, Meditation, Self-examination, Holy Communion. In these things is the very breath of life.

But further, God unites man to Himself by these means in order to make him an instrument for the accomplishment of a Purpose and Will which embraces all mankind. The Christian, chosen, called, and empowered, is to be an effectual instrument for the service of mankind. He is to save his life by losing it—*i.e.* by abandoning it to the full extent which the service of his Master in the persons of his brethren shall claim. The life of personal relationship to the Master cannot end with the perfecting of the individual character. It inevitably conducts to the larger life of service. Christ "ordained twelve that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils."[1] So in the case of every disciple, life begins with the enjoyment of

[1] St Mark iii. 14.

personal relationship with Jesus. He calls them to be "with Him" in prayer, self-discipline, the bearing of the Cross, in worship, and in Communion. But this is only that they may fulfil a mission in life, viz. to declare His Gospel, to apply its healing power, and to establish His Kingdom in the world,—"I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me."[1]

Thus it will be impossible to rest content with instructing the candidates in the articles of the Christian faith, and with leading them on to the full privileges of worship and Communion which attach to them as members of the Church of their Baptism. It is by every means to be impressed upon them that religion cannot be regarded as a thing by itself, but as "a way of doing everything." Just as life cannot be conceived of as an affair of separate departments but as a whole, so religion must touch and inspire and vitalise the whole of life. It must be brought to bear upon everyday conduct, for the very test of religion is its application to life.

[1] St Luke xxii. 27–29.

While there will be no question as to this general proposition, great practical difficulty is always felt in giving definite directions. It has been an admitted defect of our system, that, as a general rule, we fail to impress our people with the sense of responsibility as members of the Body to take their share in promoting its healthy life. The weighty words of indictment by the late Bishop Westcott will be admitted as an expression of a realised truth. "Our National Church has hitherto for the most part trusted to the spontaneous devotion of a few, when we require the organised co-operation of all. She has not made sufficient demands on the generous spirit of her sons and her daughters. She has not acknowledged the value and the necessity of the social labour of every believer. She has not striven to inspire each one of her children with the enthusiasm of service. She has not pressed home the fact that in spiritual as in temporal things we are in danger from what has been called 'the slow suicide of idleness.' She has not recognised all workers as being alike ennobled in their several offices by the dignity of being fellow-workers with God.

"In this she has wronged the brotherhood, and she has wronged the world. It is, indeed, only by direct service that we can come to know, however imperfectly at the best, what the Christian life is, what is the power, the promise, the joy, of the fellowship in work to which we are called."[1]

If there is any time at which the full "demands on the generous spirit of her sons and her daughters" can and ought to be made by the Church, it is at this time of their Confirmation. The necessity for such a demand to be made upon the fully-initiated Churchman is forcibly stated by the Bishop of Birmingham. Speaking of the receiving of full citizenship in the New Jerusalem by the "sealing" in Confirmation, he says:—"This Laying on of hands conveys an individual endowment—it is the strengthening of the Holy Ghost. But it is also a social ceremony with a social meaning. It is outwardly a benediction from the chief officer of the society, and it conveys to the confirmed his full right in the royal and priestly body. From very early days it was accompanied by anointing: it was at least called an 'unction' from St John's

[1] *Lessons from Work*, pp. 243, 244.

days. This meant what the early mediæval ritualists expressly stated, that the member on whom hands were laid was being consecrated king and priest—consecrated, that is, to his full civic and religious rights. This primitive idea makes thoroughly reasonable the novel ceremony of our present Anglican rite, which associates with Confirmation the formal acceptance by the now responsible individual of the moral duties of his Christian position. But we have lamentably let slip the accompanying idea of the lay priesthood and citizenship, an idea so essential to that reform of the Church on really representative lines which is so widely desired, and for which Confirmation ought to afford so significant a basis."[1]

Our objective, therefore, will be that our Candidates for Confirmation shall gain such an outlook upon life as a whole, such a point of view of its purpose, as will enable the newly enfranchised Christian citizens to balance privileges by duties, and to set them to search for means to realise their true life. They must look upon their

[1] *The Body of Christ*, by Charles Gore, D.D., pp. 323, 324. (John Murray, 1901.)

whole life in all departments as consecrated to the service of God, for which all faculties of heart, mind, soul, and strength will need to be developed and trained. For employment and perfecting of these faculties scope must be found in that discipline of life which even "the trivial round and common task" will furnish.

So the endeavour must be made to connect religion with daily work. If once it be recognised that our daily work is the material out of which character is formed, then no direction in which toil is exerted will appear fruitless or ignoble. "It is not the work which each man does—student, teacher, enquirer, man of business, artist—which makes the difference between man and man; it is not the work, but the *consecration* of the work; the moral colour thrown over it by a life which has an account to give, which owns the bond, not merely of external attraction, but of inward duty,—which pleases itself in its work—why should it not?—but does something more than please itself,—which feels at every step that it must at last be judged."[1]

[1] *Human Life and its Conditions*, by Dean Church, p. 60.

No opportunity should be lost of helping those whom we teach and with whom we come in contact to see in their daily work the opportunity for Divinely appointed service.

We may be permitted to cite in illustration an experience of our own, which arose out of dinner-hour talks with some navvies who were engaged in laying a sewer in a certain street, which did not enjoy a very enviable reputation in the district. Coming from a distance, these men were not favourably impressed with the character of the inhabitants, whose homes were obviously neither clean nor healthy, and whose ways were not ways of pleasantness and whose paths were not paths of peace. Sympathetic touch with the clergy was established at the opening talk by welcoming the men into the parish as fellow-workers who had opportunely come along to lend them a hand in their work. In answer to the curious look of surprise which this word of welcome excited, it was necessary to explain that the work of the clergy and of the Sanitary Authority was really identical, in that both were undertaken to improve the conditions under which healthy life

in that district could be promoted. They were not slow to acknowledge that of the two, the work of the clergy was the harder, inasmuch as it appeared to them a hopeless undertaking. Of their own job they could take the exact measure and could set a definite period to its completion. "I say, guv'nor, it'll tak ye all yer time to finish that job: we'll be through wi' ourn long fust!" was one spokesman's way of putting it. Whether it were from a generous desire to help us, or from a deeper sense of other needs of their own, it was at least a striking object lesson to the people in that squalid street to see a strong contingent go out of a sewer-trench straight up to the Parish Church, to join in a short dinner-hour service every Friday for a couple of months. To the clergy, at least, that street has seemed a brighter and more hopeful sphere of work ever since.

The opportunity should be taken, when giving instructions on the Ten Commandments, to insist upon the duty and dignity of all labour. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all that thou hast to do," &c.—with the Catechism explanation, "My duty towards God is . . . to serve Him

truly all the days of my life." The teaching of the Fourth Commandment deserves fuller treatment than it frequently receives. An experience related of the late Bishop How of Wakefield is a warning not to take for granted that its meaning is clear to those who are able to repeat it glibly. On suggesting that a class of boys in the National School should write it out, he discovered that one of them had written—"Six days shalt thy neighbour do all that thou hast to do, and the seventh day thou shalt do no manner of work"! That is not an altogether inadequate statement of the British idler's creed!

Certainly one test of the seriousness of the candidate during the period of preparation for Confirmation will be the way in which he does the duties nearest to him, at home, in school, or at work. It is in these spheres that most frequently the discovery is made by him of the intimate connection between Christian faith and Christian conduct, and that an outlook is secured which permanently uplifts the worker, and ennobles in his eyes the work of his whole subsequent life.

When this principle of consecration is grasped,

the standard of effort in all manual work will be raised: there will be noted a silent protest against all careless, slovenly, or scamped work. "As unto the Lord" will become a motto to be worked out in the humblest details of practical life.

An opportunity for teaching that life is for service will be presented in the exposition of the meaning of the Sevenfold Gift of the Holy Spirit. This includes all the endowments of our nature—

(*a*) intellectual—"the spirit of wisdom and understanding;"

(*b*) moral—"the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength;"

(*c*) spiritual—"the spirit of knowledge, and true godliness, and the spirit of holy fear."

The Holy Spirit is given that men may have "life more abundantly;" that all natural gifts may be quickened, enriched, and consecrated. In teaching the meaning of this Sevenfold Gift let it be frankly admitted that all gifts possessed by man are from above and come down from the Father of lights. There must be no encouragement given to draw sharp lines of distinction between what we are accustomed to call

"natural" gifts and "spiritual" gifts. All natural gifts are spiritual in the sense that they are the gifts of the Spirit, Who moveth in all things and "hath filled the world,"[1] and are bestowed in order to accomplish a spiritual end. They are capable of infinite development and perfecting as they are "stirred up" in those to whom they have been given. Intellectual, moral, and spiritual gifts are "natural," in the sense that they are integral parts of our physical being. They are endowments which enrich life, and when consciously used for that divine end they are in the highest sense spiritual. In the language of the Old and New Testament all gifts are directly ascribed to God. "The Spirit of the Lord" is constantly said to move in men whether as Soldiers, Judges, Prophets, or Artists. Such men were moved and inspired to accomplish a divine and spiritual end. Their natural gifts, whether of invention or physical strength, of artistic creation or leadership and government, of teaching or authorship, were spiritual in the proportion in which their possessors yielded themselves as instruments to do God's will. By

[1] Wisdom i. 7.

the use of such gifts the life of mankind is enriched, and through those who develop them and respond to them, God is ever speaking by "divers portions and in divers manners." Those interpreters of Divine messages, whether through the medium of paint or marble, through verse or prose, by drama or history, by creations of the imagination or by realistic representation, are among "the goodly fellowship of the Prophets." It will be an unspeakable loss if we do not recognise in the beneficent work of Doctors, Nurses, Writers, Artists, Teachers, Statesmen, the operation of the same Spirit, Who through a wondrous diversity of ministrations by human agents is dividing to every man severally as He wills. It would be a wilful misreading of Christ's teaching about His gift of the Holy Spirit to mankind if we were to regard any department of human activity as remote from His quickening and enabling grace. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; . . . He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine; therefore, I said that he taketh of mine,

and shall declare it unto you."[1] The conclusion is irresistible that "all things that the Father hath" must be held to include whatsoever faculty His power has created, and His love has manifested in the perfect Humanity of the Son of Man.

The Spirit which was not given by measure to the Christ and which abode with Him, moved Him to accomplish the Will of God by a whole-hearted service of man. The manifestation of the Spirit in Him was of the love of God going out in unhindered energy to give life that all His brethren might have it more abundantly. And to-day the manifestation of the same Spirit is given to every man, who is prepared to receive it, "to profit withal." All individual gifts whether of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues are for the enrichment of life regarded as a whole—the life of the family, the household, the church, the nation, the race. It is so that St Paul teaches that all spiritual gifts are to be regarded, and for this reason to be coveted earnestly.[2]

[1] St John xvi. 13–15. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 7 *ff.*

Christ gave gifts unto men in His Ascension to empower human agents whether as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Teachers, or Pastors, "for the perfecting of the Saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."[1]

It is such a conception of spiritual life, with its motive for the development of all God-given faculties by every individual because they are needed for the Body and can contribute richly to its welfare, which will redeem our municipal, commercial and political life from what will otherwise make it sordid and selfish, and will alone counteract those forces which already count so decisively in favour of materialism. The Christian, indwelt and moved by the Spirit, is to be the potent and decisive factor in the world for righteousness: he is to be "the salt of the earth," to act like leaven; to let his light so shine before men that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven. Inspired by such

[1] Eph. iv. 7–14.

a motive he will set himself to play his part strenuously in the life of the Parish, the Vestry, the Council. He will not shrink from public service in any capacity or office for which need of him is felt and expressed. "We want public souls," it has been urged again and again—men, that is, in whom the love of service is strongly rooted; men who will interpret the principles of the Christian life on a Board of Guardians, a Hospital Committee, a Trade's Union or Municipal Council, a Governing Body of any kind which is concerned with the public welfare. The general good is promoted in proportion to the number of those who are unselfishly working to secure it. "When the best men cease to try," it has been said, "the world drops back like lead!" To put such an ideal of life before those who are entering upon its duties is to invite a response from all generous souls. Such an appeal speaks straight to the human heart and will not be denied. "We were put here to do what service we can, for honour and not for hire: the sods cover us and the worm that never dies, the conscience, sleeps well at last; these are the wages, besides what we receive so lavishly day by day,

and they are enough for a man who knows his own frailty and sees all things in the proportion of reality." [1]

At the age when Confirmation comes to most young people the question as to their profession in life will be generally undecided. In this respect, as well as in every other, it is a critical period in their lives. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" is a question which must be asked regarding the determination of the course of their life as a whole, and not in any restricted direction. In the long run the answer will be found to depend upon the degree of earnestness with which each questioner refers to Him with Whom it is realised that we have to do. In so referring to Him it will be impossible to disregard the possibility of a direct call to the Sacred Ministry. The pressure of the urgent need for more spiritual agents both at home and abroad is being acutely felt at the present time. Its undoubted pressure constitutes a call to a heart-searching inquiry by those who realise the enormous responsibility

[1] *Letters of R. L. Stevenson*, p. 13.

attaching to all who "are very members incorporate in the Mystical Body of Christ." It is an appeal which should be presented to the young with all its wide attractiveness as the highest opportunity which life has to give of service; as the one which demands the exercise of the best faculties of man's nature as well as that which provides ample scope for the employment of every gift which God has given. It should be presented likewise as the question of all others upon which the vital health and effectiveness of the entire Body depends, one which therefore concerns every individual member. For the success of the great enterprise entrusted by God to human agents, the extension of the "Kingdom of God" throughout the world, nothing can be so vitally important as the supply and training, the equipping and maintaining of men and women as effective workers. Until the question of this supply is honestly faced by the whole Body of the Church, together with those questions which are bound up with it—viz. the training of workers who shall be thoroughly efficient, the pensioning of aged and non-effective clergy, the systematic and

adequate support of those who are on service abroad as well as at home—we must not be surprised if the cause of "the Kingdom" remains too often a struggling one, and the reproach against the King be repeated down the ages, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish." We cannot allow such an opportunity to pass as a Confirmation preparation presents, without a serious effort to bring home to the hearts and consciences of the young the just measure of their personal responsibility in so great a matter. They must come to appreciate the meaning of the motto, "Every Christian a missionary."

If help is to be given to the candidates, both male and female, to rise to the height of their Christian calling, the truth must be persistently urged upon their attention that, whether as clergy or laity, no one has really found his or her place in the Kingdom until they are putting their hands directly to its work. Time and thought and infinite resourcefulness will be demanded on the part of the Clergy who instruct them if our people are to be guided to employ their special gifts in profitable direc-

tions. In some of the following ways which are suggested, it will be possible for each and all to find some work in the Vineyard: *e.g.* :—

The work of Intercession.
Sunday-school teaching.
Lads' or Girls' Clubs.
Choir.
Church of England Men's Society.
Brotherhood of St Andrew.
Committee for Church Defence and Church Instruction.
Girls' Friendly Society.
Mothers' Union.
Lay-helpers' Associations.
Guild of Pity.
Charity Organisation Society.
Relief Committee Work.
District Visiting.
Secretarial work for parochial or other Societies.
Keeping accounts: sending out notices.
Evangelistic work in the parish: visiting special cases of chronic sick folk suggested by the clergy.
Canvassing districts for Special Services in Lent and Advent.
Membership of Home and Foreign Missionary Associations; attendance at meetings for Church Extension; Working Parties and Needlework Guilds for charitable objects.

> The constant service of witnessing for Christ in the home among equals, and in the world among playmates or workfellows; the bringing such persons nearer to God by introducing them to and inducing them to join a Bible Class, Band of Hope, Temperance Society, Church Lads' Brigade, the Missionary Union or Association.

Of the duty specially attaching to the confirmed to bear their witness in the world it will be impossible to be too emphatic. It is commended by all spiritual guides. In a small pamphlet, Bishop Wilkinson thus insists on the duty:—

"Ask God to give you courage to open your lips and bear witness for Him to somebody. If only I could get you to do this thing, you would make more progress in a day than others in ten years. I have known a man who turned three of his companions, after hearing teaching like this; and they all afterwards became devoted to God. He was a very shy man; but when he went back among his friends, he said, 'I think we shall be wrong, if we continue to live in this careless way. I am going to make a new start.' Two of those four men eventually became Clergymen."[1]

[1] *How to Begin a New Life*, by the Right. Rev. G. H. Wilkinson (Wells Gardner, Darton & Co.), price 6d.

In speaking on this subject at a working-men's meeting held at the Folkestone Church Congress, the late Bishop Creighton used this happy illustration,—"You know that we have a crook in our arm. Why was it given to us? It was given to us that we might put it through the arm of another fellow, and guide him on the straight way."[1]

The time to bring these matters definitely before Church men and women must not be left, as is too often the case, to chance. It will never be done at a more favourable moment than when they are most receptive, responsive, and enthusiastic.

Closely connected with the responsibility of all members of the Body to share its common burdens is the subject of Almsgiving. The miserable expedients so generally resorted to for the support of Christ's Kingdom in the world are traceable to the lamentable ignorance among our regular Church people of what is a serious part of every man's duty. It is perhaps due in part to a want of faith and courage in the clergy themselves, who are often reluctant to give definite and explicit teaching

[1] *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, vol. ii. p. 115.

on this subject; but it should on no account be omitted at a time when a regular habit of Almsgiving may be acquired.

It will be impossible, *e.g.*, when teaching the Eighth Commandment to avoid plain speaking upon such things as raffling at bazaars, lotteries for charitable objects and the like. There would seem to be special need to teach the positive duty of a Congregation to pay its just debts out of its own and not out of other people's pockets; and as a necessary consequence the duty of each individual member to contribute his fair share, according to his ability, in the support of the Parochial, Diocesan, and Foreign work of the Church.

The practice of systematic Almsgiving will never become a recognised part of Christian duty until, from the moment of their entry upon the full privileges of their calling, the young disciples are taught to make it a matter of principle and rule.

While it is in every way desirable that each candidate should be pointed to some definite task to be undertaken, such work will be all the while presented as a means to the great end,

the establishment of the Kingdom of Righteousness in the world.

To become "fellow workers with God unto the Kingdom," means that our whole life is to be a witness to the Gospel as the "power of God unto salvation." There must be conscious realisation of the truth that we are not our own, but have been bought with a price, and that the debt can only be discharged by the consecration of life with all its powers to the duty and joy of service. Let it be constantly insisted upon that the object of all individual efforts after holiness is not the salvation of the individual soul, but to be fitted thereby for more fruitful service, according to St Paul's ideal—"though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more."[1] Deference to this comprehensive principle will determine the Christian's conduct in matters which, though lawful, are not always expedient, not from any fear of the effect upon himself, but upon others by his example;—"lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak."[2]

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 19.

[2] 1 Cor. viii. 9.

Ample scope for the practical application of this principle of bearing witness in the world will be supplied in such matters as amusements, Sunday observance, and the like.

Soldiers and servants of Christ must intensely realise that the honour of the Christian cause is entrusted to their keeping, that in their generation they are responsible for handing down unimpaired the glories of their inheritance. Their whole life must tell as a witness to the indispensable value of the Christian character. They must be prepared to find that as confirmed persons they will be closely and critically scanned by no partial judges in the world, where nothing is in practice so great a hindrance to the Christian cause as the unfaithful and inadequate manner in which it is presented by its professed exponents.

"It has been well said that a creed which has long moved men to noble action may at last cease to move them, not because it is found to be untrue, but because it has been incompletely represented."[1] Nothing less is required as the main objective of the Christian's life than that

[1] Bishop Westcott, *Lessons from Work*, p. 293.

the Creed which alone can move men to noble action be completely represented by him who confesses it. Nothing less is required, because by response to such demands man attains to the "life which is life indeed." By service and by service alone we fulfil our Divine mission and receive the fullest blessings which life has to yield. Life is thus regarded as a great sacrament. The common elements of human nature are taken out of the world and chosen for Divine service. They are consecrated at the definite moments of Holy Baptism and Confirmation. They are the means by which God's Grace is received in its fulness, and are pledges to assure mankind of the Father's constant presence to help and bless all His children. By the faithful and humble surrender of himself to be the instrument of blessing, the Christian is himself blessed. He becomes a fellow-worker with God, and in so doing he enters on that life of service which is found in ever-increasing experience to be perfect freedom.

CHAPTER VIII

FINAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR

(i.) *The Day of Confirmation*
(ii.) *After Confirmation*

It is important that the day of Confirmation should be marked in the lives of the candidates as one of special solemnity and of holy joy.

The greatest care and forethought should be exercised so as to avoid all hurry or confusion at such a sacred time.

At the last class minute directions should be given as to the place and hour at which to assemble, and by what means each one will reach the church where the Confirmation is to be held.

It will be obviously desirable that the party should all go together with their clergy rather than make their way separately to the church. There is a detail which should not be overlooked in the case of the female candidates. So many heart-burnings and distractions of mind are

occasioned in the matter of the dresses and veils to be worn on the day of Confirmation, that it is advisable that plain directions should be given them quite early in the stage of their preparation. Such directions would probably be that the veils will be provided for all the candidates so as to secure uniformity; but that if, for sentimental reasons, any desire to have their own veil, they are at liberty to have it made according to the pattern adopted for the rest. These directions should be accompanied by the reminder that at such a time of critical importance in their lives it is essential that their minds should be undistracted by these obvious though unimportant details. Though only a small measure of success, it is to be feared, will be achieved in this direction, every possible discouragement should be given to those tendencies which even at such a time come into active play.

At the last class the Service of Confirmation should be carefully gone through with the candidates: they should be told what books to bring and how to spend the time of waiting in the service: prayers and hymns should be definitely suggested for their use while the other candidates

are being presented to the Bishop. It will be well to instruct them in what order they will come up to the Bishop and how they are to return to their places after being confirmed.

As there will invariably be some amongst them who are unbaptized, or who have been privately baptized and never "received" into Church, it is desirable that such a service be held, if possible, the evening before the Confirmation when all the candidates are present. No better means will be found for bringing home to all of them that event of their own Baptism for which they are awaiting the Seal in Confirmation. In some cases there may be a natural reluctance to be baptized in the presence of the other candidates, and it will be obvious that such a feeling must be respected.

In the case of those who have never been publicly "received" into the congregation of Christ's flock, it will help them to overcome any reluctance if it be pointed out that in their case no promises were actually made at their Baptism; and that it will seem unreal to renew at their Confirmation what was not made at Baptism, to ratify and confirm and acknowledge them-

selves bound to believe and to do all those things which no Godfathers and Godmothers ever undertook for them.

Though they will have realised during their instructions that all these things were *implied* in the act of their Baptism, yet their Confirmation will be a greater reality to them if beforehand they have themselves in their own name made those promises. Now that they know all that it implies to be incorporated into God's Holy Church, they will welcome the act which signifies their public reception.

Some will be found to be uncertain whether they have been duly and validly baptized; where any reasonable doubt exists such persons should be conditionally baptized.

Cases have been met with where persons have been confirmed, and no inquiry was made previously as to whether they were baptized or not. As it is plainly declared in the Bishop's prayer preceding the Laying on of hands that the condition has been complied with that these persons have been regenerated "by Water and the Holy Ghost," they should be presented for Confirmation after being duly baptized.

At this service of Baptism and Reception the attendance of Parents, Godparents, and Witnesses should be strongly pressed. Attention should be early invited to the direction in the Prayer Book at the conclusion of the Catechism that "every one shall have a Godfather, or a Godmother, as a witness of their Confirmation." The intention of this Rubric, so generally lost sight of, is that each confirmed person shall have some one who will stand to him or her, as the case may be, in a recognised position of responsibility after as before the event. Whereas at Holy Baptism the duty of Sponsors was to lie in seeing that the child be taught what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he has made, and to "provide that he may learn all the things which a Christian ought to know, and believe to his soul's health," as well as "to take care that he be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed," the need for one to act as a witness after the event of Confirmation is now insisted on.

The functions of a "witness" are thus described in the Exhortation at the end of the Service for the "Ministration of Baptism to such as are of Riper Years, and able to answer for themselves."

"Ye must remember that it is your part and duty to put them in mind, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession they have now made before this congregation, and especially before you their chosen witnesses. And ye are also to call upon them to use all diligence to be rightly instructed in God's holy Word; that so they may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world."

It is regarded as important that help should be given by human remembrancers and watchful counsellors. This much-needed assistance of trusted friendly monitors ought not to be neglected. Those who acted as Godparents at Baptism may be dead or at a distance, or are most likely unsuitable at this crisis. The Prayer Book clearly contemplates the provision of that continued help along the way of perseverance in Grace, which loving, wise, sympathetic friends can give. Out of the body of Communicants, Church workers and others, there ought to be found those who will be found willing to act in this capacity of "witnesses." By this means there might be revived a new sphere of most useful and fruitful

Church work. Each candidate would thus have some one, whether elder brother or sister, relative or friend, who will stand by him to help and counsel and encourage him. The feeling of isolation and loneliness would not then press so heavily after the Confirmation preparation is ended; he would feel closely linked by a living elder brother or sister to the life of the family and the Kingdom.

In every parish, whatever may be the means adopted, there should be those who recognise a responsibility towards the confirmed to be in a real sense their brothers' keepers.[1]

On the day of the Confirmation it will be well to have a celebration of the Holy Communion, at which it would be natural to request the attendance of the Parents, Godparents, Friends, and "Witnesses" of the candidates, as well as the faithful communicants of the congregation. To all of these notice should be given that the candidates for Confirmation will then be individually remembered, and that they will be prayed for

[1] See an instructive and suggestive account of the office of witnesses in a pamphlet entitled, *Witnesses of Confirmation*. S.P.C.K.

by name. It will be a great help to the candidates themselves to know that others realise the solemnity of this great event in their lives and are watching them and praying for them with loving sympathy, as a congregation as well as individually.

Arrangements should be made for spending the rest of the day after the Confirmation, if the service should be in the afternoon, as quietly as possible. The idea of the day of Confirmation as a holiday and an occasion for an "outing;" should be discouraged in every possible way.

In some cases it may be practicable to have a service in Church—in no case long or tiring—but, with a brief word in an address emphasising something special which the Bishop said in his address.

Following this, it has been found helpful to have a gathering in the school or parish-room at which lantern views are shown, preferably of the Church's work abroad. The idea throughout will be to keep the candidates together and to occupy them in a healthy and rational manner rather than to leave them to their own devices after a time of unwonted strain. The inevitable stage of reaction after the tension of the day is relaxed needs to be sympathetically tided over. Readers

of that delightful story of *A Very Ill-Tempered Family* by Mrs. Ewing will not need to be reminded that in our anxiety for the newly-confirmed we must not be too exacting in our requirements, nor be disappointed if sometimes their seriousness of mind should be expressed in ways that surprise and shock us at the time. We there read :—

"When the service was over, the fatigue of the mental strain and of long kneeling and standing began to tell in a feeling that came very sadly near to peevishness. . . . I all but utterly broke down into the most commonplace crossness because Philip did not do as I did, but romped noisily with the others, and teased me for looking grave at tea. I just did not break down. . . . Long afterwards, when I learnt by accident that Philip's 'good resolve' on the occasion had been that he would be 'kinder to the little ones,' I was very glad that I had not indulged in my uncharitable impulse to lecture him on indifference to spiritual progress."[1]

[1] *A Great Emergency, and other Tales*, by Juliana Horatia Ewing. (George Bell & Sons.)

After Confirmation

All candidates should be definitely told, without any room for mistake in the matter, that the class will meet next week as usual, and that every effort will now be concentrated on their preparation for Holy Communion.

Although a certain amount of instruction on this subject will have been given already, it will in practice be found more helpful to the candidates to keep the instructions for Confirmation separate from those for Holy Communion. It is not advisable that too long an interval should elapse between their Confirmation and first Communion, although it is good that a certain time should be devoted to definite instruction exclusively upon this subject. The danger of their failing to proceed to their Communion will be the less if throughout their preparation the thought has been kept prominently before them that Confirmation is only the necessary step to the complete life of the Christian Communicant. The connection is sufficiently obvious. In their Confirmation they receive the unction of the Holy Spirit. They become in a special sense "the

Lord's anointed." The lay priest receives endowment of power to act in a threefold capacity as Prophet, Priest, and King; he is to bear witness in the world, to serve the Lord, and to rule himself. (Rev. i. 6; 1 St Pet. ii. 5, 9.) God provides special means to enable him to fulfil this high calling. That means is the Sacrament of Holy Communion whereby is received "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ." *e.g.* :—

(*a*) Without this enabling grace the Christian cannot bear his Prophet's witness faithfully, so that men can take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus.

(*b*) As Priest, he is called to offer spiritual gifts and sacrifices; and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained as the means whereby every Christian in his priestly capacity may plead before God "the continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ," and may derive for himself and for the Body of which he is a member "the benefits which we receive thereby."

(*c*) As Kings, we can only hope to rule by that right and title to kingship which the Cross enshrines. This pledges us to the strictness of a

watchful life; its best safeguard is in doing that which is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper: viz. "to examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His Death; and be in charity with all men."

It must obviously depend upon the date of the Confirmation, and the circumstances prevailing in the particular parish, on what Sunday all the candidates will together make their first Communion. Where possible, it will be advisable that their first Communion should not be made at one of the great Festivals; but that they should come on one of the Sundays preceding, without the distraction and hurry inseparable from the presence of large bodies of Communicants either at Easter or Christmas. They might then come to the great corporate gathering of the faithful at either Festival.

In these instructions in preparation for Holy Communion, warning should be given them to resist the inevitable inclination to relax efforts after this time of special struggle, and to pre-

pare themselves to resist the temptation to cease trying after discouraging failures. They must realise that the whole of their life will need to be devoted to perfecting that which has been begun in them; and that the response to God's call to that perfection of which imperfect creatures are capable, can only be made by perseverance.

The wise rule about perseverance given in *The Imitation* should be laid to heart. "When one that was in great anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once humbly prostrate himself in prayer and said, 'Oh, if I knew that I should persevere!' he presently heard within him an answer from God which said, 'If thou didst know it, what wouldst thou do? Do now what thou wouldst do then, and thou shalt be safe.'"

It is for perseverance, "the hardest of crosses," as it has been called, that they must resolutely prepare. The particular direction in which effort is to be made should be specified in the resolution which they offer to God at their Confirmation. That resolution ought to be a photograph to the individual of the impression left upon him by this time of earnest preparation. It should be trans-

ferred to paper, written down and carefully preserved. "Let your resolution be generous, but, let it be wise," is the advice of an experienced guide. It should be something practical, definite and precise enough to touch daily life, a test to be constantly applied as a standard, but at the same time not too ambitious. Suggestive help in making such resolutions will be found in *Hints to a Rule of Life* by the Rev. V. S. S. Coles (Mowbray); and in *How to Begin a New Life*, by the Right Rev. G. H. Wilkinson, Bishop of St Andrews (Wells Gardner & Co.)

"We must go on fighting," the late Archbishop Temple used to say in Confirmation addresses. "We are not bound always to win, but we are bound not to give up fighting till we do win. . . . The man who *tries*—that's the man who goes on fighting year after year; the more he goes on, the closer he comes to Christ. . . . In every such self-conflict the Holy Ghost comes to us; and in spite of many slips and falls we are certain of victory, if only we persevere. And when we persevere long enough and God sees that it is good for us, He gives us complete victory, so that many of our temptations pass

away altogether. If you persevere the victory is certain, for you are in God's hands and not in your own. . . . The Laying on of Hands is God's message to you to say that the Holy Spirit will never leave you, if you do not leave Him."[1]

As an aid to perseverance, arrange if possible to continue the same classes once a month, so as to hold them together and prepare them for regular Communion. At the end of a year they may be admitted to a Communicants' Guild, or preparation class, as the parochial machinery may provide.

The practice of holding an Anniversary Service on the Sunday following the annual Confirmation can be confidently recommended. To this all who have been confirmed for the last ten years may be invited. To all it will be a solemn and impressive reminder of the critical event of their lives.

Some definite piece of work for God should be found for them to do as early as possible, as a means of realising their Christian vocation, and

[1] *The Christian Battle*, being notes of Confirmation Addresses delivered in Devonshire and in London, by the Right Rev. Frederick Temple, D.D. (Printed by permission.)

in accordance with that profound truth, "No one is living the Christian Life unless he is doing Christian work."

Unquestionably the critical time for most Candidates will be the year following their Confirmation, as it will certainly be an anxious time for the Clergy who have prepared them.

Such natural anxiety must not, however, impel us to over-much interference on their behalf. They must not "walk on crutches," but run the way of God's commandments, now that their heart is set at liberty. It is not healthy or good for them to be too dependent on outside help, they must learn self-reliance in its true sense according to the precept, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."[1] Development of powers comes quickest and best by that which calls out self-help and self-reliance. It must not be forgotten that just because God wills us to attain a likeness to Himself, He has appointed that we should win it by struggle. There is no other method of progress in any department. A father who is

[1] Phil. ii. 12, 13.

teaching his boy to swim lets him struggle out of his depth and urges him to strike out for the shore, not because he wants his son to drown in mid-stream, but because only so will he discover his own powers and by exercise improve them. The father encourages him to make the attempt, but it is an attempt the lad must himself make. He will not let him sink, and by every stroke he takes the boy will gain fresh confidence.

It is a disappointing thing no doubt in experience to find how little apparent steadfastness our scholars display when left awhile to themselves. But the inclination to intervene must be restrained, although this restraint will not mean that vigilance is in any way relaxed. If the watchman is alert, he will discover the opportunity to help when it is absolutely needed. The picture characteristically drawn of how, in the service which allows no mistakes, "the Sub gets learning," may be an instructive one for landsmen to consider.

The author of *A Fleet in Being* shows us a youngster on the bridge of a battleship at midnight, responsible to keep his distance, the third in a line of four. The next ahead has slowed, and confusion in the line comes speedily,

with its possibilities of disaster. Meanwhile, the sub bears the weight of responsibility, and, when at last the tangle is straightened, he thanks heaven that the Captain didn't wake. "But the Captain was awake all the time. The change of speed roused him, and he lay watching the tell-tale compass overhead, his mouth at the bridge voice-tube: one eye cocked through the open port, and one leg over the edge of the bunk—in case. The sub must learn his business by himself; must find confidence in isolation, precisely as the Captain did a quarter of a century ago. It is not good for him to know that he is being watched."[1]

Neither is it good for our candidates to know that they are being so anxiously watched.

It were well if we could all remember that. Those for whom we are so anxious will learn, even by the mistakes from which we would fain save them.

We are, after all, but instruments in God's hands—instruments that have very definite limitations. By the discipline which life brings God will Himself teach them what they cannot

[1] Rudyard Kipling, *op. cit.* p. 28.

learn from us. But even so, let the lines of communication be kept open at all costs; no one's self-reliance will be one whit impaired from a knowledge that there is a wise friend and sympathetic counsellor to whom he can go in a crisis.

Our impatience to see more progress in our slow pupils must not cause us to forget what our own case was at that stage of growth, nor how sorely we tried the patience of our Master.

Thankful indeed we shall be that God has vouchsafed to use us as the instruments of His Holy Spirit in this blessed work,—thankful beyond words if we can see in those young lives of rich promise some fruit of our imperfect service, and may even hope to be able to say respecting it, — "We are unprofitable servants. We have done that which it was our duty to do."[1]

[1] St Luke xvii. 10.

APPENDIX

A SCHEME OF INSTRUCTION FOR TWELVE CLASSES

The following scheme is suggested for instructions to be given in the classes held on week days.

The author's practice has been to give a course of short instructions on the Creed at the conclusion of the Sunday evening services, to which all the candidates, as well as members of the general congregation are invited.

Instructions on the Creed are for the above reason omitted from this scheme.

I

CONFIRMATION: WHAT IT IS

Confirmation is the Laying on of hands upon those who have been baptized. It is the means by which we receive the Holy Ghost, in order that we may have strength to live the Christian life.

1. Read and explain accounts of Confirmation in the Bible.

(Acts viii. 14–17, xix. 1–6; Heb. vi. 1–6.)

From these it is clear that the Laying on of hands

(*a*) pre-supposes and is the completion of Holy Baptism;

(*b*) conveys a special gift which is not received at Holy Baptism;

(*c*) is a gift meant for all who "receive the word of God." *Cf.* Chap. ii.

2. The Gift supplies the great need of our weak human nature.

Jesus Christ came to save mankind, *i.e.* to give men power to live. Life is Union with the Source of Life,—God. Union with God is only possible

(*a*) by doing God's will (St Matt. vii. 21);

(*b*) by knowing God (St John xvii. 3);

(*c*) by being like God in goodness, holiness (St Matt. v. 48).

But we are most conscious of an unlikeness to God, an ignorance of God, a preference for doing our own will. To deal with this fundamental fact of sinful human nature, Jesus Christ "for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man."

His Gospel is the Gospel of Life because it is the good news that

(*a*) we can have power to do His will;
(*b*) we can know God;
(*c*) we are meant for union with God.

3. All Christ's promises of Salvation depend upon the receiving of the Holy Ghost.

(St John vii. 37, 40, xiv. 15–20, 25–29, xv. 26, 27, xvi. 7–16; Acts i. 4–8.)

The three years devoted to teaching the Apostles was practically their preparation to receive the Holy Spirit. When they had received this gift they were ready to go forth to do the work of life.

This same gift is meant for you, to enable you to enjoy true Life—union with God: to know God: to do His will.

II

CONFIRMATION: HOW PREPARED FOR

Remember what Confirmation is; the uppermost thought must be that you are preparing to receive the Holy Ghost.

1. **For receiving this Gift certain conditions are necessary—**

From Acts viii. we learn that

(*a*) they "had received the word of God" (ver. 14);

(*b*) they "had been baptized" (ver. 16);

(*c*) their hearts were right before God.

N.B.—The incident of Simon Magus is instructive, showing that *a right disposition in the recipient is indispensable.* "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right before God" (ver. 21).

2. Need to rid the mind of misconceptions regarding Confirmation. Deal with certain common objections. *Cf.* chap. iv. pp. 53–57.

3. Confirmation is—

(*a*) *A time to receive God's Gift.* There must be desire for the gift. It is expressed by prayer.

∴ *Pay great attention to prayer* (St Luke xi. 9–14).

(*b*) *A time to learn* "all that a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." St Luke xii. 35–41.

∴ *Make the best use of the instructions now given.*

(*c*) *A time to know self.* Self-examination is essential if we are to be convinced of our need of strength, both "to have victory and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh"; and "to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," that we may "live godly, righteously and soberly in this present world." Our heart must be right before God. He is waiting for us to claim the best He has to give.

∴ **It must be a time of real conversion** (Acts xxvi. 18). *Cf.* chap. v. pp. 76–80.

III

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

You are preparing to receive a gift from God. That gift is to enable you to live, to give you power to fulfil the purpose of life.

1. To understand this purpose, you must begin with the first question of religion,—"**What has God done for me?—What is my relationship to God?**"

The Catechism suggests this by the first question, "What is your name?"

You are a creature made by God, with certain faculties and powers, born of human parents: your life's purpose can only be fulfilled as you satisfy the claims which arise from the relationship in which you stand (*a*) *to God* who created you, (*b*) *to your fellowmen* with whom you live.

Your name stands for the sum of what you are, as a creature with physical, mental, spiritual capacities. Those capacities are God-given, to fit you for a life of conscious union with God.

Here apply teaching on first Article of the Creed :—

> "First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world."

2. **The relationship which was established at birth became the most intimate conceivable at Holy Baptism.** You were baptized into the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "*A* child of God" became "*the* Child of God."

The purpose of your life is that you should be true to this relationship.

When a relationship which exists becomes consciously realised, life begins to be enjoyed. Existence is not life.

The time has now come to realise life in conscious union with God. *Cf.* Chap. iii. pp. 29–43.

God's purpose for you is the fulness and completeness of life in union with Himself, not mere creaturely existence.

N.B.—People may stand in a certain relationship to things, to persons, and to God, and yet never be conscious of it. They miss the purpose of life. You *may* miss the purpose of your life.

This is the time, then, to make the relationship between you and God a reality. Life has a purpose: rise up to fulfil it. It is to be understood in the light of God's revealed will. Set yourself to discover it.

Speak of the enjoyment of this relationship in prayer, with practical suggestions as to its practice.

IV

THE CHRISTIAN CALLING

Knowledge of what God has done for you already will constrain you to say, "I heartily thank our heavenly Father that He hath called me to this state of Salvation."

1. The greatness of the Christian's privilege is only understood by realising our state at birth.

"A man born into the world" inherits a sinful nature (Eph. ii.).

The inherited taint, the disease, the mistake of sin involves impossibility of union with God and enjoyment of life (Rom. iii. 9–24).

Illustration.—A waif and a stray, unclothed, unfed, ready to perish, stands on doorstep of great man's

house. Love opens the door which admits to the warmth, protection, and love of home. The child is "adopted"; brought into relationship of Sonship and Brotherhood in the Family of God.

2. Holy Baptism opens that door to new life.

The necessity to be "born again" arises out of the facts of human nature. "Ye must be born again" (St John iii. 3–9).

2. Explain terms—

"A member of Christ."

"The child of God."

"An inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

Cf. Rom. vi. 3–12; Gal. iii. 26–29, iv. 3–8; Col. i. 9–15.

3. The Adoption of sons is "this state of Salvation."

The "New Birth" is for life, growth to maturity, development of character in likeness to God. It is a state which must be *kept*. We may receive the grace of God "in vain" (2 Cor. vi. 1).

Emphasise the moral claim which Holy Baptism makes. Continued need of grace, "that I may continue in the same unto my life's end."

The time has come when the relationship must be consciously realised, its privileges claimed, responsibilities accepted. To realise the greatness of the gift of God in Holy Baptism is to desire to lead the rest of life "according to this beginning." *Claim your baptism. Cf.* chap. i.

"Ratify and confirm" the existing agreement. See that the seal is fixed which completes that which is begun (2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13, 14, and iv. 30).

Make a definite decision for Christ.

V

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY

The next question of religion is, "*What then must I do for God?*" *Cf.* Catechism: "Dost thou not think that thou art bound, &c.?" and "What is required of persons to be baptized?"

1. Explain the nature of this binding. The Christian's Duty is inherent in the Christian Calling.

To enjoy the privileges and prerogatives of membership of Christ, you must be true to the grace received in Holy Baptism.

N.B.—You are free to repudiate the obligation expressed in the Baptismal promise. You may refuse to be "bound." God's respect to your nature as His son is shown by inviting a willing response. *Cf.* Heb. xii. 7. The response of love must always be an act of free-will.

As sons we are "bound"

(*a*) to renounce what is wrong;
(*b*) to believe what is true;
(*c*) to do what is right.

You will never be more "bound" to do all this than at present.

2. Explain the meaning of the promise and vow made in Holy Baptism.

The promise makes explicit what the event of Baptism implied. It is the definite statement of the ideal of the Christian's action. The promise does not create the obligation; it acknowledges its binding force.

So at Confirmation, by the renewal of vows we do not

(*a*) take them upon ourselves; nor

(*b*) incur new liabilities. *Cf.* p. 57.

We "ratify" and "confirm" them in our own persons. We recognise the indispensable connection between Religion and Morality. We accept the responsibilities of life.

3. **Everything depends upon continuing Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto your life's end.**

Strength is needed to fulfil this duty. "*By God's help*, so I will." Question now is, "What have I done for God?" "Have I been true to my Baptism?" "Where have I failed?" "Where am I weak?"

Need for searching self-examination (*cf.* pp. 77, 78),

(*a*) in order to gain forgiveness for the past;

(*b*) in order to pray for "strength to have victory" in the future.

VI

THE VOW OF RENUNCIATION

(*a*) "The devil and all his works."

Meaning of "to renounce"—"that thou wilt not follow nor be led by."

"to fight against sin, the world, and the devil."

N.B.—Avoid explanation "to give up," "to have nothing to do with," as unreal and perplexing.

1. Temptation is not Sin.

(St Matt. iv. 1 ; St James i. 13–15 ; 1 St Peter iv. 12–14.)

Temptation is the condition of our state. The purpose of life is only fulfilled by lifelong struggle : fighting manfully against sin. Sin is the result of a consent of the will to follow and be led by the devil. *Cf.* Gen. iii.

2. The works of the devil to be renounced.	**Positive duties to be fulfilled.**
(*a*) *Pride.* 1 Tim. iii. 6. Putting self first, the root sin. Selfishness.	*The 1st Commandment.*—Obligation to put God first, to do what we ought rather than what we like.
(*b*) *Unbelief.* All sin is refusal to believe in God. St John xvi. 8–12.	"*My duty towards God is to believe in Him. . . .*"
(*c*) *Disobedience.* 1 St John iii. 4–10.	*The 5th Commandment.*
(*d*) *Anger.* St Matt. v. 21–26. St John viii. 44. Bad temper — Uncharitableness. 1 St John iii. 11–12.	*The 6th Commandment.*
(*e*) *Lying.* St John viii. 44. Deceit. Eph. iv. 25, 26.	*The 9th Commandment.*
(*f*) *Envy.* St Matt. xxvii. 18. Jealousy, discontent. St James iii. 14–17. Unthankfulness. Col. iii. 15.	*The 10th Commandment.*

By each consent to follow the devil, to do his works, you have sinned. You refused to acknowledge the Sovereignty of Christ.

"We will not have this man to reign over us" ended in the shout "Let Him be crucified." That you "may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil," you need to receive the Holy Spirit.

VII

THE VOW OF RENUNCIATION

b "The Pomps and Vanity of this wicked world."

1. The "world" consists of all creatures which God has made. Any persons or things which lead us away from God are "wicked."

1 St John ii. 15–17, v. 19.

We are deceived and led by things which make a show —"pomps." We often follow the shadows and miss the reality of life. This is "vanity." (*Cf.* picture of man with a muck-rake in Pilgrim's Progress. St. Luke xii. 15–21,—the rich fool.

2. When we misuse good things we follow and are led by "this wicked world."

E.g.—(*a*) *Pleasures*: *amusements.*

Not bad in themselves; but when they interfere with duty to God and man they must be renounced. Theatres, music halls, dancing, &c. *may* lead away from God and cause neglect of prayer, worship, and work for God. St Luke viii. 14.

(*b*) *Company.*

We can't always avoid bad people, but we can refuse to be led by them. "The fear of God makes men brave: the fear of man makes men cowards." St John v. 44.

(*c*) *Dress.*

Following a desire to make a show and attract attention to self: being led to think too much, and spend too much on such things is "of the world." St Matt. vi. 24-34.

(*d*) *Money.*

The love of it "idolatry." St Luke xii. 15; St Mark x. 24; Col. iii. 5. Misuse of money by gambling, betting, lotteries, &c.

3. Examine Self by the Commandments for positive duty.

(*a*) The worship of God or worship of His Creatures. 2nd Commandment.
(*b*) Honour paid to God. 3rd Commandment.
(*c*) God's claim and the world's. Sunday observance. Service. 4th Commandment.
(*d*) Generosity. Almsgiving. 10th Commandment.

4. We are in "the world" to win it for God.

Positive duties of the Christian.
(*a*) To witness to the truth of life. St Matt. v. 13–16; St John xviii. 37.
(*b*) To serve God as loyal subjects. St John xvii. 14–18.
(*c*) To extend the kingdom. St Matt. xxviii. 18–20.

VIII

THE VOW OF RENUNCIATION

(*c*) "The sinful lusts of the flesh."

1. "Lusts," desires, appetites, which belong to our nature as men, become sinful when indulged to excess or contrary to God's commandments.

It is unnatural for man, who is "a living soul," "the Child of God," "the Temple of the Holy Ghost," to be led by his lusts. Rom. vi. 12–23.

Man as a moral being obeys the law of his nature by controlling and having dominion over his desires. He is

not to be the sport of impulse, but self-disciplined, controlled. *Cf.* St Matt. xv. 18–20 ; Gal. v. 19 to end ; 1 Cor. vi. 19 to end.

2. The body must be a willing servant, not a tyrannical master.

(*a*) By self-denial. St. Matt. xviii. 8–10.
(*b*) By avoiding occasions of sin. 1 Thess. v. 4–10.
(*c*) By activity in doing good. St Matt. xii. 43–45.

3. Teach meaning of Self-respect.

(*d*) Positive duty "to keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity," explained by 7th and 8th Commandments. *Cf.* Chapter vi.

Man, made in the Divine image, is ennobled by the call to fulfil a Divine purpose . . . His body is to be "kept" as the instrument of the Spirit, the organ of Divine service.

4. Helps.

(*a*) *Fasting:* self-denial. St Matt. v. 29–30.
(*b*) *Use of the Means of Grace.* Eph. vi. 10–18.
(*c*) *Work:* the remedy for idleness. 1 Thess. iv. 11.

IX

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

Whenever we have followed and been led by these three enemies, we have fallen into sin.

We know by experience what sin is to us.

1. We must realise what sin is to God.

We must be "convinced of sin." St John xvi. 8–11.

The truth of life is shown to us in Jesus Incarnate. He has declared the loving will of God for sinners (St

John iii. 16–21, vi. 37–41). Man's response to the appeal of Love is seen at the Cross. There all sin—"the sin of the world"—is seen to be *the rejection of God.* The consequence of man's refusal to follow Jesus and to be led by Him was that "*He was crucified.*" *The Cross is the picture of what you have done,* by not "fighting against sin, the world, and the devil."

2. We must realise what God has done for us.

"He hath redeemed me and all mankind." The Cross is the picture of the At-one-ment wrought for us. There we see that

(*a*) *the price for sin has been paid in our nature* (Rom. v. 22–21; Heb. ix. 22). The penalty of sin is death (Ezekiel xviii. 20). No man could pay it and live (Ps. xlix. 7; Rom. vi. 23). Christ alone could pay it, because He is the sinless Son of man (Heb. iv. 15). On the Cross He paid it (St Matt. xx. 28).

(*b*) *the Atonement is complete, because He is the Son of God* (Heb. vii. 25–28). His death was the death of sin (2 Cor. v. 14–21; Gal. iii. 13).

Apply doctrinal teaching of the Incarnation and Atonement: show how Christ is man's Redeemer, because He is "*the Lamb of God.*" (St John i. 29).

3. Forgiveness of Sin is for all those who claim the benefits of Christ's Death.

We establish our claim to forgiveness by **Repentance** (Acts ii. 37–40). When we truly repent we make Christ's act our own.

e.g., His Death (*a*) expressed Divine *hatred of sin.*
(*b*) was the full *acknowledgment of guilt.*
(*c*) was the act of *restitution for sin.*

Repentance expresses (*a*) hatred of sin, in *Contrition.*
(*b*) acknowledgment of guilt, by *Confession.*
(*c*) Restitution for sin, by *Newness of life.*

N.B.—The Bishop's prayer before the Laying on of hands assumes that all who come to be confirmed *have received "forgiveness of all their sins."* Will it be a true statement of your state?

X

THE CHRISTIAN'S HELPS

The review of what God has done for you, and what you must do for God has convinced you of your own weakness and helplessness. Now you realise that *your greatest need is power to live the Christian life.* You ask, "How will God help me?"

1. To match your need God has provided help—"Means of Grace."

Cf. question in Catechism before the Lord's Prayer: "Know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself . . . without His special grace," and petition in Litany, "endue us with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to Thy holy word."

2. Instruct on Prayer and the Sacraments:

(*a*) *Private prayer.*
(*b*) *Public prayer.* Special promises for combined prayer. (St Matt. xviii. 19.)
(*c*) *Study of God's Word.*
(*d*) *The Sacraments*, by which grace is given, in ways ordained by Christ, as means whereby we receive grace and pledges to assure us thereof.

Confirmation conducts to the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. There you will find all that you need for life (Heb. iv. 16). It is your real ground of hope (St John vi. 54–58). It provides "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ."

3. Consider the point reached by these weeks of preparation.

You have not been conducted to a perilous position on a high peak after a laborious struggle, where you feel dizzy and afraid as you look down and realise your isolation. You have reached a vantage-ground of real hope. The prospect is of new sources of help for life. Confirmation opens the door of that inner chamber where is the presence of the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother (Prov. xviii. 29); in whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there is pleasure for evermore (Ps. xvi. 12).

4. Confirmation conducts to Union with God. That is the end of all religion, and the true enjoyment of life.

You receive grace to receive more grace (St John i. 16).

Look forward to the Holy Communion.

XI

NEW LIFE IN THE CHURCH

1. The life on which the baptized and forgiven Christian enters is life in a body—corporate life in the Church.

The isolated life is incomplete life. "To be saved is, of its own inherent nature, if only we understand it,

to be saved into a Church." The relationship entered upon in Holy Baptism is realised as a "state of salvation" in a society, a Kingdom (Eph. ii. 19–22 ; Heb. xii. 22–24).

Illustration.—Picture of a woman clinging to the Cross upon a rock in the midst of the waves. This is the state of salvation which the individual believer first knows. The discovery that she is on a headland of her native land conducts to conviction of "this state of salvation" as enjoyed in the life of home, of citizenship in the kingdom. *Cf. God's City*, by Canon Scott Holland, pp. 18 *ff. The fullest life for man is life in the Holy Catholic Church* (1 Cor. xii.). It is the Divine Society for all to belong to ; the means of union with the living Christ ; the sphere in which the Holy Spirit works "to sanctify me and all the elect people of God."

2. **The Church is the home of Grace.** We are "grafted into the body of Christ's Church" that we may have vital union with Christ (St John xv.). Christ imparts His life to individuals by the Holy Spirit through ordered channels. Spiritual gifts are bestowed through outward means. We have no knowledge of life apart from a body, or of a kernel without a husk. Though religion is spiritual, its benefits are bestowed by outward means and through human agents.

This is the principle of

(*a*) *the Ordained Ministry :* the Apostles' fellowship. (Eph. iv. 11–16) ;

(*b*) *the Sacraments in the Church.* To be in loyal communion with the Church is to be connected with the source of the supply of all grace (1 St John i. 1–8).

Illustration.—The water supply of a city is stored in reservoirs and conveyed by conduits of clay or iron. It

is useless to individual citizens unless they are connected with the supply.

So the essential need for life is to be in direct connection with the store of grace. In the Church we have all that we need for life: in it we have fellowship one with another. We belong to "the Communion of Saints."

XII

THE CONSECRATION OF LIFE TO SERVICE

1. The response made to God's call is by Self-consecration.

At Confirmation we come to give ourselves to God, to decide for Christ, resolving "to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto our life's end." We deliberately enter upon the mature life of the Christian.

The meaning of "*I do*" in answer to the Bishop's question. It is the unreserved response to God's call.

(Summarise teaching given upon the Baptismal vow.)

2. To enable you to do this, God bestows the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

The gift corresponds to all needs of your being.

(*a*) **Intellectual** — "*the gift of Wisdom and Understanding.*"

(*b*) **Moral**—"*the gift of Counsel and ghostly Strength.*"

(*c*) **Spiritual**—"*the gift of Knowledge,*" gained by experience of a personal God and Saviour.

"*the gift of true Godliness*"—by conformity to the likeness of Christ, by surrender of your will to God's.

"*the gift of holy Fear*"—by which we have courage to bear witness in the world from fear of missing the purpose of life.

God claims the whole of man's being. *Cf.* pp. 125–131.

3. **You must respond by making life the opportunity for Service: by the consecration of all powers to fulfil life's purpose.** *Cf.* pp. 133–140.

N. B.—Confirmation is only a means to the great end of all life, which must be consciously pursued by lifelong performance of

(*a*) *duty towards God.*

(*b*) *duty towards Man.* God will perfect what He has begun in you if you are faithful (Phil. i. 6; 1 Peter v. 10–13).

Sum up practical meaning of this in

(*a*) *your Confirmation Resolution* (*cf.* pp. 153–154);

(*b*) *your rule of life;*

(*c*) *your vocation.*

(Prayer; Bible; Holy Communion; Fasting; Almsgiving; Occasions of Sin.)

Final warning. The work of grace is only beginning. The manifold "Fruits of the Spirit" are to ripen gradually. "Patient continuance in well-doing" is the only ground of Confidence and Hope (Rom. ii. 7). The gift of the Holy Spirit is to be bestowed "that he may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until he come to Thine everlasting Kingdom."

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London

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